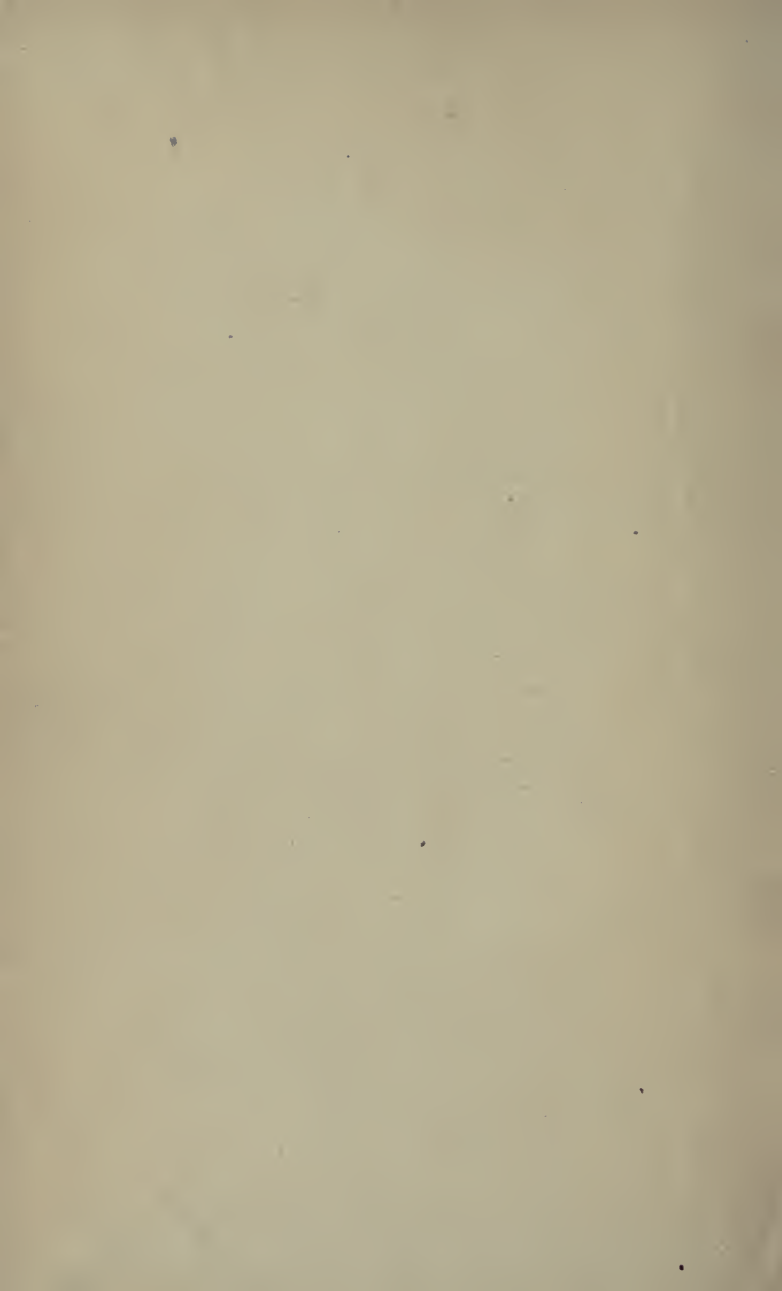


INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN  
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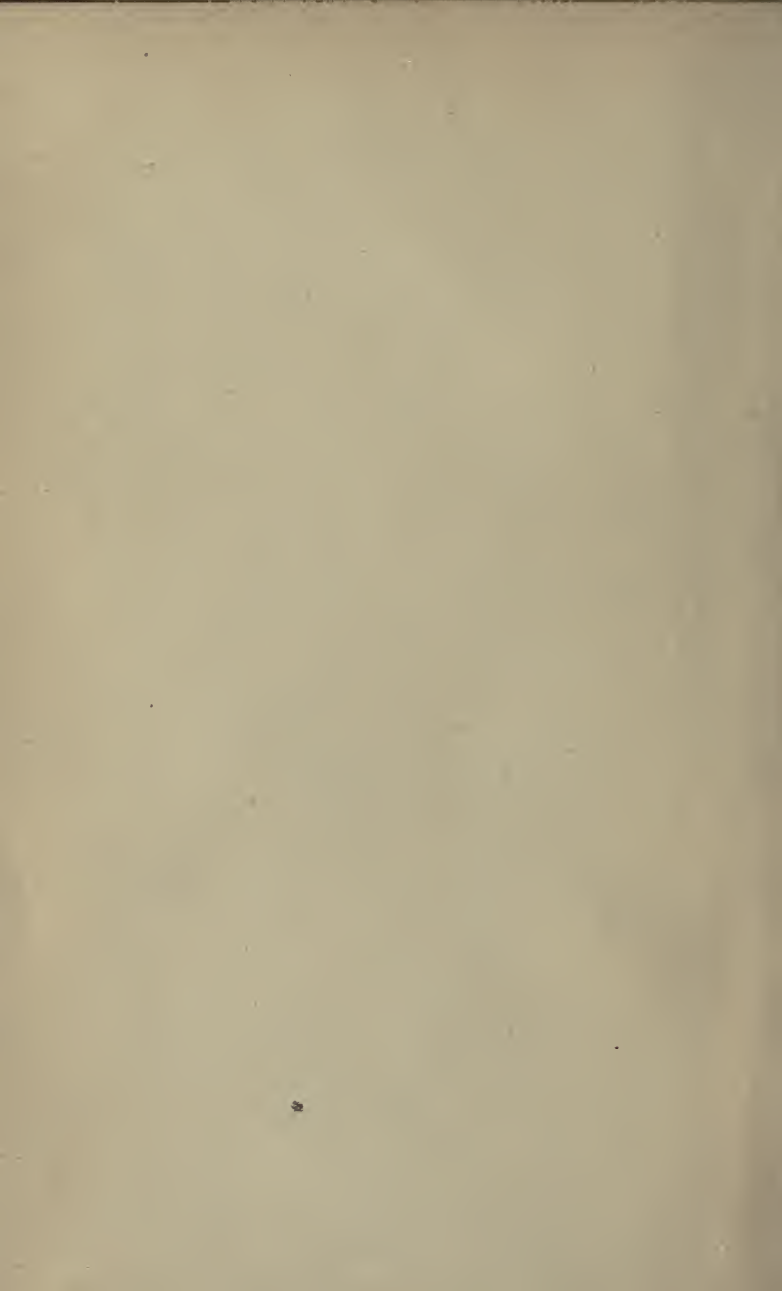
SIN AND THE ATONEMENT

*N. BURWASH, S.T.D., LL.D.*





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# INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN THEOLOGY

INCLUDING THE

DOCTRINES OF SIN AND THE  
ATONEMENT.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE following pages were originally papers read before conferences of clergymen met for theological discussion. They are in part printed as originally read, and in part have been enlarged and revised as class lectures for my Divinity students. The method which I have endeavored to follow, and which I have ventured to call inductive, may require explanation. I have regarded theology as concerned with the doctrine of Christianity as formulated intellectually by the reason of the Christian Church. Such doctrine in every age has arisen from the religious consciousness or spiritual life of the Church. A fervid and even rich spiritual life may exist without scientific formulation of the principles it involves, just as a tree may grow, nay, must grow before the science of botany can be constructed. All theology, therefore, has its origin in the spiritual life or Christian consciousness, and is in fact the observation, definition and logical concatenation of the facts of that consciousness as it stands related to God and His will as revealed to man. But this spiritual life, out of which the theology of the Church has taken shape, has itself taken

both its form and content from the revelation of God made in Jesus Christ, and originally manifest as spirit and life in His apostles and prophets, as well as in the Church from Pentecost onwards. This, the typical and perfect spiritual life set before us in the New Testament, and in a preparatory and more elementary form in the Old Testament, is the true foundation of theology, the true material which it shapes into theological science. We can use this material, it is true, only as we apprehend it by the teaching of the Spirit as a part of our own spiritual life. But the man who rests in the contents of his own spiritual life, or even in the contents of the spiritual life of the entire Church in any one age, and who then fails to go to the fountain-head, the normal type of the age of inspiration, is certain to find his theology defective. No man has embodied the whole truth of the revelation of God given in Jesus Christ in his single spiritual life. Even in the New Testament itself, a Peter, a Paul, and a John supplement each other to give us the fulness of Christian truth. We have, therefore, used the Spirit within as the interpreter, but always as the interpreter of the written Word. Our method then has been to seek out by the light of the Spirit from the Word the facts or elements of truth from which to build our science. Upon these materials our science has wrought, endeavoring first, to define them, and then so to combine them as to enable our reason to grasp something of the full-orbed body of truth.



In no field of thought is the feebleness of human intellect more manifest than here. In none has our progress been so slow. In none has it been so difficult for succeeding generations to retain the conquests of the past. These are not treasures which can be catalogued in museums, or which can even be formulated for keeping in books and in the memory. We can understand an Augustine, a Luther or a Wesley only as we live over again their spiritual life. Kant lies neglected on the shelf in a materialistic age, and few can follow the thoughts of such a spirit as T. H. Green. In the brief span of human life we must first live up to the measure of the past before we can step into the new beyond. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Christian world has moved so slowly. If these studies will help my younger brethren to grasp more of the treasures of the Divine wisdom, they will have served their purpose.

N. B.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY,  
*May 7th, 1896.*



## MORAL RESPONSIBILITY, PROBATION AND SIN.

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MORAL responsibility is a fact most clearly revealed both in universal human consciousness and in the Holy Scriptures. The nature of this responsibility, the conditions of its development by means of probation, and the results of that probation in man's sin and its consequences are the subjects of our present inductive investigation. In making this induction we shall confine our attention to the acknowledged facts of man's moral consciousness, and to the definite statements of Scripture. In a matter of so much practical importance as man's moral responsibility, the essential facts must lie open to universal cognizance, either in our common conscience or in some accessible form of revelation. Any matters which are not subjects of well assured and general cognizance cannot be essential elements of a practical system of moral responsibility.

### RESPONSIBILITY.

Responsibility includes not only an inward or subjective sense of obligation, the "ought" of conscience, but also the real objective relation in eternal

righteousness corresponding thereto. This implies a real person obligated, a person or persons to whom he is obligated, and a person or persons by whom the obligation may be enforced. It is not sufficient to say that conscience enforces the obligation. Granted that this is so, who made conscience to enforce the obligation? Has He other means and ways of enforcing it? If the sense of obligation represents an eternal and immutable truth, a law of right, then conscience has been fashioned according to that law, and in other things, and all things, we may expect that the Creator of conscience works according to the same law of right. Conscience thus becomes the witness for the moral ruler to whom and by whom we are held to obligation. Responsibility, when analyzed thus, implies the following facts: Man is held to answer for his acts, (1) to his own conscience; (2) to those to whom he owes duty; (3) to God who made him; and this obligation is incorporated by the Creator in man's own nature, and in the constitution and history of the world in which he lives. This obligation compels him to accept as right the consequences of his own acts imposed by the law of right, as well in their form of penalty as of reward. His deepest sense of truth says it is right, it ought to be.

Thus far the facts are so obvious, both in our conscience and in Scripture, that detailed proof is unnecessary. But given thus the fact that moral responsibility truly exists on the basis of an essen-

tial principle, or law of right, we must next inquire, (1) Are all men so responsible? (2) Are they responsible for all their acts, *i.e.*, at all times and under all circumstances? (3) Are they responsible only as individuals? or, Are they also responsible in collective capacity? The first two of these questions may be answered together. The common verdict of our moral judgment does not hold all men to unconditional responsibility. An idiot is not judged to be responsible, nor is an insane person. There must be as a basis of responsibility a moral nature sufficient to enable a man to know the right from the wrong. "There is a spirit in man: and the breath of the Almighty giveth him understanding." (Job xxxii. 8.) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that do thereafter." (Psa. cxi. 10.) "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." (Psa. xlix. 20.) In all these passages, "understanding," *i.e.*, the power of moral discernment, is set forth as the basis of human responsibility.

But to this moral nature, or capacity for moral action, there must be added a measure of light, of truth, of knowledge from without of that which is required by the law. The knowledge of that which is required must be in a man's possession, or at least within his reach. This principle of moral judgment is again recognized in all those Scriptures which measure increase of responsibility by increase of

light. Matt. xi. 20-24, xxv. 14, etc., and especially John iii. 19: "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world." John ix. 41: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Again, our common moral judgment limits responsibility by ability. This limitation, like the previous one, must be carefully guarded. As in the case of knowledge, so in that of ability, responsibility extends to that which lies within our reach as well as to that in our actual possession, and to that which has been lost or forfeited through our own fault as well as to that which is at present enjoyed. But the general principle of responsibility according to ability, is clearly taught by our Lord himself in such passages as Luke xii. 48., where it is associated with knowledge: "But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required. And to whom they commit much of him will they ask the more." The careful form of expression here used guarding against abuse of the principle is very worthy of note. It is put in the positive form. The *alleged* absence of knowledge or ability does not prove no responsibility, but still responsibility grows with knowledge and ability; hence these are of its essence, and of these it would appear that our Lord did not regard any man as entirely devoid. But given these three conditions of responsibility, a moral



nature, knowledge, and ability, the next question is, how does responsibility attach? Does it belong to the person individually, or to the body or society of men collectively? The answer seems to be to both, but in a different manner in each case. There can be no question that, given the foregoing conditions, each man is held to individual and personal responsibility for his personal acts, even though those acts be done in connection with others. This again is the verdict of the common moral judgment of the race, and also the clear teaching of Scripture. In the Old Testament, such a passage as Ezek. xviii. throughout is very clear and emphatic: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." In fact, the teaching of the passage is to the effect that no form of hereditary responsibility can override individual responsibility. In the first and second chapters of Romans we have also a very clear assertion of responsibility of all classes of men, including those from the Gentile world, and this extends "to every soul of man that doeth evil." (Rom. ii. 9.) Their being without law does not exempt them (v. 12), for (v. 15) "they shew the work of the law written in their hearts." There is certainly in this passage the strongest assertion of a universal individual responsibility upon which eternal destiny is made to depend. God "will render to every man according to his works." (Ch. ii. 6; so also Gal. vi. 5, 7, 8, 9.) But in addition to this supreme individual responsibility, there is also clearly set before us in the

moral judgment of men a responsibility which belongs to men in solidarities, *i.e.*, as families, communities, and as a successive race. (Gen. xviii. 23-32; Ex. xx. 5, 6, xxxiv. 7; Num. xiv. 18, 33; Deut. iv. 40; Psa. xxxvii. 25, 26; Prov. xxix. 8; Isa. xiv. 20; Jer. xxxii. 39.)

This common responsibility does not lie in the nature of moral obligation *per se*, but in the peculiar form of human moral development and probational relations. Hence a passage such as Ezek. xviii. is to be distinctly understood as limiting the law of common responsibility, as set forth above by preceding writers. Individual responsibility alone is final and supreme. Collective responsibility is temporary and subordinate. Hence when we come to study probation we shall find that it moves from the collective to the individual form of responsibility, and the common responsibility at last terminates in that individual judgment where, notwithstanding our mutual moral relations in which "none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7), "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (v. 12).

### PROBATION.

This study of the general principles of moral responsibility leads us next to the consideration of the question of probation. Probation is the term used to express the historical conditions under which responsibility is exercised with a view to a final



judgment by which the probation is terminated. Probation is thus in its very nature temporary. It is not the final condition of a moral being, but the initial stage of his moral life, that in which he creates desert, a record, and moral character for himself. Such probation emerges in every form and variety of human life, and is perfectly familiar as an historic fact to all men. Men are continually involved in probational relation to each other. The question of the inductive theologian is, does such a relation exist, or has such a relation existed toward God? If so, what are, or have been, the conditions of such probation? If such a relation between God and man has existed, or now exists, it is a fact of history, and can be ascertained by historic evidence. The Scriptures are pre-eminently the historic record of the relations of God to man; and here we find, first of all, an original probation of man at the very foundation of his moral history with certain clearly stated conditions and results. Again we find a gradually unfolding present probation under a world's redeemer, with conditions revealed from time to time with the world's moral progress, and results to be reached at a final day of judgment. These historical statements of Scripture find ample confirmation in various corroborative facts of history and human experience, and in the convictions of our conscience, and no belief has been more widely held by the race than this, that human life will end with a judgment

before God. The second and third of Genesis and the fifth of Romans, vv. 12-19, are our authority for the fact of a primitive probation of man, and the general moral teaching of Scripture, together with the explicit declaration of a future judgment, are our authority for the present probation of men ending in that judgment. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Eccles. xii. 14.) From these general considerations we may assume the scriptural doctrine of a twofold probation of man before God. First, an initial probation terminating in the fall of man and his sentence; secondly, a present probation to terminate in the sentences of the final judgment.

By an examination of each of these probations we must seek to ascertain more explicitly its nature or conditions. We have seen already that responsibility involves not only a moral nature, but also some knowledge of the duty to be performed and some ability to perform it. Probation, as the initial stage of responsibility, involves the growth or development of the moral nature, the increase of knowledge of duty and of the ability to perform it. A probation is thus such a condition, or conditions, of moral life as gives the opportunity to create desert and character for ourselves. It does not assume the Pelagian position that the good is something done by us, not created in us. It acknowledges the good created in

us but as a basis for a good to be done by us, and not as taking its place. Probation is therefore a talent to be improved, not a fortune to be enjoyed. (Matt. xxv. 14-30.)

The central condition of probation is the duty to be performed on the basis of which judgment is to be passed on the probationer. Accessory to this is, on the one hand, the subjective condition, *i.e.*, the capacity of moral nature bestowed on the probationer. On the other stands the objective condition, the environment of moral influences by which he is surrounded. The nature of the probation must always be determined by these three sets of conditions, and into these we must inquire, first, as to

### THE PRIMITIVE PROBATION.

1. What was the test of the primitive probation, the duty which it required, the norm or rule of moral action on which it was founded?

In the moral history of the race as presented in Scripture, probational test or law appears in three forms :

(1) Symbolic acts, prescribed as of Divine authority, and representing or embodying important elements of moral and religious duty. Even in the New Testament we have two such probational acts prescribed as badges of the Christian profession, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Under the Mosaic law a large use was made of this form of probational moral discipline.

(2) Definite concrete acts of moral and religious obligation founded, not simply on authority, but upon moral and religious reasons clearly apprehended, *e.g.*, the Ten Commandments.

(3) General principles—the application in concrete act being left to the individual moral judgment and conscience, *e.g.*, the Christian law of love.

These several forms of probational law correspond to stages of moral development, and belong respectively to the infancy, the advancing development and the moral maturity of the race. They are also successively applicable to every individual. The child under authority may conscientiously observe forms of moral and religious life before it understands reasons. The growing youth may understand the moral reasonableness of particular duties before he is able to apply general principles to all new circumstances of life for himself. So in the world's history, prescribed forms, or even symbolic acts, play a most important part in moral life, even to-day calling out and awakening conscience. The order is, first, a simple prescribed act, next a definite moral commandment, finally the universal principle of "faith working by love."

The original probation of the race as stated in Gen. ii. and iii., is placed in the observance of a single symbolic ordinance. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the

day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) There is indeed reference to another tree and an eating thereof, which seems to represent the positive side of religion. The tree of life represents apparently the conscious reception from God of the gift of life; but this is conditioned on the previous probational law. There is thus a remarkable parallel between these two ordinances of the primitive man, and those first of the Mosaic and then of the Christian economy. The tree of knowledge, circumcision, baptism, all set forth the ethical side of relation to God—separation from sin. The tree of life, the passover and the Lord's Supper represent the religious side of relation to God—the gift of life from Him.

It may be objected that we are assuming here that the account in Genesis is literal history. This is not necessary. Even those who take it as an allegorical or tropical representation of the primitive ethical relations of the race, must admit that it contains the ethical principles referred to, as well as others to which we shall now refer, and unless they are prepared to discard the authority both of this passage and of St. Paul, they must admit the validity of these principles.

The employment of a symbolic ordinance as the test of probation implies the moral infancy of the race. It is the awakening of conscience as from the innocence of childhood, the simplest and most elementary form of the consciousness of moral obligation,



which is here set forth. Man is permitted to build from the deep foundation this structure of moral character. God does nothing for him which he can do for himself. Definite moral laws and universal moral principles will all come to him in due time as the reward of probational fidelity and experience. Any other arrangement would have deprived man of something of the glory of moral being. The subjective conditions of the primitive probation are thus conceived as those of a little child, and so our Lord teaches must all probation begin. Matt. xviii. 3: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The account in Genesis presents also the objective conditions or environment of the primitive probation as embracing temptation as one of its elements. This temptation includes subjectively the presence of the lower and the higher self, to borrow the language of the current philosophy, and that morality lies in the assertion of the higher selfhood. It implies also that the law or test of probation gave a concrete form to this assertion. "Thou shalt not eat"—appetite is subordinated to Divine authority. But it implies still further that the lower self is called up by an active agent from without represented in this case by the serpent. (Gen. iii. 1.)

If it be asked, Is this reasonable? Is it consistent with the love and justice of God that temptation should be permitted to intervene in the primitive pro-

bation of an infant race? Paul indeed asserts that in a righteous administration of probational conditions temptation is limited. 1 Cor. x. 13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Peter in like manner gives us the Divine reason of temptation. 1 Peter i. 7: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." So James i. 2, etc. Temptation endured is a helper to moral perfection. It is therefore not inconsistent with either God's justice or goodness.

The account of the primitive probation given in Genesis is thus a perfectly rational one, and whether construed literally or allegorically it contains the elements of ethical truth which must of necessity have entered into man's moral development.

From the nature of the primitive probation we may now turn to its result. This is embodied in a wonderfully picturesque narrative, which again is in every circumstance true to the deepest ethical truth of our nature. It has been variously interpreted, but no form of interpretation can eliminate the principles of moral truth which it contains. It corresponds to the process of temptation, sin and fall in every individual man. It gives us:

1. The presentation or suggestion from without of the forbidden act as an object of natural desire.

2. It does this in the face of the conscious knowledge of the prohibition, thus converting innocent natural desire into temptation to sin. So Rom. vii. 9: "When the commandment came sin came into life, and I died."

3. It presents the suggestion of unbelief or disbelief in the truth, rectitude or goodness of God in making the prohibition (v. 5).

4. The next step is an inward yielding to this suggestion, accepting the word of the tempter before that of God (v. 6).

5. Then follows the act which outwardly breaks the commandment.

6. Then follows (a) The sense of moral degradation, (b) Guilty fear.

7. Finally, the probation is judged and the sentence pronounced, and penalty enforced.

In the process as thus set forth there are four stages:

1. Simple temptation. There appear in consciousness the suggestion of sin and the light of the command. This does not involve any sin.

2. Reasoning. God's commands are reasonable. (Rom. xii. 1.) His law is holy, just and good. (Rom. vii. 12.) But the reasoning process implies *growing desire*, and hence danger.

3. Doubt. This is the beginning of all sin. (Rom. xiv. 23; John iii. 18.)



4. The completion of the transgression in the outward act. (James i. 15.) Even at the third stage there is still possibility of return, but at the fourth step the final record is made, and that which is done cannot be undone.

### SIN.

The act of sin thus culminated involves two elements :

1. Transgression of law. 1 John iii. 4 : "Sin is the transgression of the law." Rom. v. 13 : "Sin is not imputed when there is no law."

2. That which gives transgression its true nature and results, viz., guilt. This includes (a) the inherent badness or evil of sin as opposed to the eternal, immutable and perfect right and good. (b) Desert of, and liability to, penal consequences, *i.e.*, guilt objective. (c) The inward response of conscience to this desert and liability, *i.e.*, guilt subjective.

On the badness of sin as opposed to the goodness of light, *i.e.*, truth and right, see John iii. 19, 20, and xv. 24 ; on its desert, see Rom. i. 18 and ii. 4-11 ; and on the response of conscience, see Rom. ii. 14, 15 and vii. 12, 13. Of the Old Testament conception of the nature of sin we may learn much from the names given to it in the Hebrew language. It is:

1. *Avon*, a twisting or perverting, wrong perverting right.

2. *Raa*, a breaking, or destroying.

3. *Sheker*, a weaving, *i.e.*, falsehood.
4. *Aven*, breath, emptiness.
5. *Shagag*, wandering, error.
6. *Pesha*, rebellion against authority.
7. *Rasha*, lawlessness.
8. *Asham*, laid waste, *i.e.*, condemned under guilt or penalty.
9. *Amal*, toil, misery, suffering.
10. *Chattath*, a missing of the mark, *i.e.*, the true end or reward of life.

In the New Testament the most comprehensive definition of sin is the Greek word *ανομία*, lawlessness. The *νομος* or law expresses the true, the eternal right relation of things. This relation springs from the nature of God as the author of the universe. It finds expression in His eternal word and is His will. Sin breaks this, contradicts it. It is wrong relation. First of all, in its commission it is the reversal of the moral law within. It is the law of our moral nature that all the lower self, all motives which spring from the senses, the appetites and the selfish desires, should be subject to the judgment and control of conscience. But sin overthrows this law, since in its commission the will is not directed by conscience but yields to the lower nature influenced from without.

Again, sin as a completed act is the taking up by me of a wrong relation toward God, or my fellow-beings, or both. The moral law within, which re-

quires the supremacy of conscience, is a perfect counterpart of that moral law without, which prescribes my right relations to all other beings. And a violation of the moral order within, immediately that it comes forth as an objective act, puts me out of right relations to the universe. But this single act, subversive of right relations within and without, leaves its permanent results within. We cannot once do wrong without producing a permanent wrong state. Sin becomes a character. And this character is a permanent lawlessness, a *state* of subversion of right relations within ourselves. However, we shall revert to this more at length hereafter.

From this it will appear that sin is not a mere negative, or a nonentity. It is true that it is not a substance. But it is none the less a reality. All realities may be distributed under three categories—substances, attributes, relations. Sin is a reality in the last category. It is not the mere absence of the right relation, it is a positively wrong relation. It is a new thing. The theory that sin is a mere negation, a nonentity, has arisen from a misconception of its origin. It originates in a negative, a not doing, a defection of the spirit. But the *external influence*, under which that defection takes place, immediately renders the sin a *positive act*. The spirit is not merely quiescent when it should act; it is *drawn toward the wrong*.

Again, the influence by which it is thus drawn is

NOT sin or sinful. Hence *sin* does not originate in the flesh, or the environment by which the spirit is united to the external world. The influence of external things is not sin. Nor are the external things themselves, which influence us, sinful. They have their legitimate function. They are to be used, not abused. But the spirit is to assert its superiority over them, not to resign itself to them. The law gives man "dominion over all the earth to subdue it." Man is master of externals. If he yields to be their slave, the sin is in *him*, not in *them*. Nor does the sin lie in those subjective susceptibilities to external influences by which man is connected with the external world. These too, like the outer world with which they bring us into contact, have their uses. They call the self forth into conscious exercise, and they are our servants for this purpose. And in fulfilling this function they are God's most precious gifts. Sight, hearing, imagination, natural affection, and even appetite, have their important and holy office. If from this subservient office they are perverted, and the spirit resigns its selfhood and personal autocracy, and yields to be led by these servants of its higher nature, the sin is in the *spirit*, not in these susceptibilities. These considerations at once exclude every theory which makes sin a necessary result of our nature or circumstances. It is *our* act, originating from the inmost self, our perversion of God's good.

## THE RESULTS OF SIN.

We must now turn our attention to the results of this sinful act; and in so doing we shall obtain a more complete view of its nature.

The immediate results are threefold. First, a subjective pain, the reproach or remorse of conscience. Secondly, the objective disorder of our relations to the universe which we designate as evil. Thirdly, the subjective disorder within which we call evil character.

The first of these three is commonly called guilt. Let us examine the nature of this.

We have not thus far spoken of conscience as a revelation from God, or, as it is sometimes called, God's representative in man, because we did not wish to depart too far from our psychological basis. We cannot, however, properly consider the nature of guilt without looking at it objectively, as well as subjectively. But first subjectively. Every act of conscience is an intuition. The ideas of right and wrong, and the motive of obligation are not the result of abstraction or generalization. They are primitive ideas, purely spiritual. Now, this third product of conscience, the idea of guilt, is no less an intuition, a simple and purely spiritual notion. And, as in the preceding intuition of conscience it was difficult to separate the more intellectual form of the intuition, as a judgment of right and wrong, from



the motive form of obligation, so here it is difficult to say which is first, the feeling of remorse or the idea of guilt. But clearly here, as in all its functions, conscience acts intuitively. And what is the function of intuition? May we not say that it looks into the ultimate nature of things. Sense affords us a *relative* knowledge. Intuition must be superadded to sensation to make up perception, which assures us of objective *reality* in relation, a *not me* as well as *the me*. Substance, attribute, power, these are ideas of the ultimate reality and inmost nature of things which come forth intuitively on the occasion of sensation. And these intuitional conceptions I cannot avoid accepting as the most profound truth of things. And if this be the function of intuition in regard to things material, is it not equally so in regard to things moral? Therefore right expresses the absolute nature of certain moral relations; and wrong expresses the absolute, universal and eternal nature of certain other relations; and guilt expresses the true and eternal nature of sin. It is the most profound view of sin in its essence which we can grasp. It is the spirit's intuitive view of its own sinful act. Liability to penalty is but an external definition of guilt. It expresses rather a conception of the real nature of sin, a conception which is in itself the most terrible of pains. But if this intuitive idea of sin, which we call guilt, expresses the ultimate truth of sin, then it expresses an absolute *objective* reality as well as a subjective state. It

is something which characterizes my sin *always* and *everywhere*, as well as in its relation to me. Then guilt has its terrible reality before God and before the universe. And if the glimpse of the nature of sin, which I have caught in the secrecy of my own spirit, be so terrible, what shall it be when the eye of the "Judge and all His holy ones" is turned upon it too?

If we hold up to view the consciousness of guilt, we shall find further associated with it a sense of apprehension, dread, fear. The particular form in which this feeling may express itself is a matter of indifference in our present inquiry. The only question is, is it universally present? If so, then it is a part of the intuition. It may take its outer form from circumstances, imagination, or revelation—the prison, the hangman, the ghost, hell. But the basis of all is within, the spirit of fear is a universal outcome of a guilty conscience. These three, then, guilt, remorse, fear, are the immediate subjective sequence of the act of sin. But they cannot be viewed as mere subjectives. They are the expression of the soul's profoundest convictions as to the real nature of sin. Guilt is the centre of these. Remorse is the soul's wail over the past. Fear is its terrible prophecy of the future.

#### EVIL

is the comprehensive term which includes all the objective realities corresponding to this revelation in the intuitions of conscience. We have seen that sin

is a subversion of right relations both within and without ourselves. Those right relations were good, productive of happiness. Their subversion then, must in the nature of things, be productive of misery. And in the same nature of things that misery will be commensurate with the natural capacity for happiness. We have further seen that all sin is a subversion of right relation to God. Hence it is a fundamental subversion. Our relation to God is without doubt the ultimate source of that happiness for which we were created. The subversion of that relation must be the source of corresponding misery. This part of the subject admits of almost indefinite expansion; but we leave it here with the single remark that what may be called the merely natural consequences of sin reach infinitely beyond the narrow subjective limits to which some philosophers would confine them. If sin is a universal wrong relation, then by that wrong relation every capacity for pleasure becomes a source of pain, and God and the universe are against the sinner because he has set himself against them.

Thus far we have tarried at the single act of sin, and have looked at it before and after its completion. Let us now turn from the act and look at the character for evil which it produces. To understand this fully we must examine somewhat further our data in man's spiritual nature. We have already referred to the feelings of guilt, remorse and fear associated with an evil conscience. These have their correspondent



affections in a good conscience. We may take the regenerate human nature as the best representative of our original constitution, and here we find, universally associated with a good conscience, a group of what we are accustomed to call religious affections, which may be reduced to three primary ones, peace, joy and love. These affections we regard as purely spiritual, first, because they arise only in connection with the intuitions of conscience; secondly, because, while they look outward toward the objective, it is a purely spiritual, not a sensible objective. Peace is the natural rest, the security of right relations as affirmed by conscience. Joy is the active happiness of those relations. Love is the motive influence which those relations afford. We rest in, we delight in, we are drawn toward our spiritual environment, while we are in right moral relations thereto. These spiritual affections cannot be defined, but the regenerate man will find no difficulty in calling them up to consciousness, and in distinguishing them from correspondent emotions which unite us to our sensible environment, and which are not spiritual, moral or religious in their character. Our senses represent but external and transitory relations, a relative knowledge, and the affections or feelings based upon them belong to the same outer court. The intuitions look into the *eternal reality* of things, and the affections which are founded upon them represent *the spirit's profoundest activity*. And these religious affections which accompany a

good conscience are its most powerful supports in the discharge of its functions. Peace, which looking to the unseen becomes faith, and into the future hope, gives strength to the spirit. It makes it bold and manly toward the right. And joy in doing right and love for the right are the strongest incentives toward its performance. They are toward the right what the lower motives, affections and desires are toward sensible objects, and hence, when by the activity of a good conscience these affections are called forth, they tend directly to give *permanence to character for good*. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence (*παρρησιαν*) toward God."

Now, let us look at the effect of the sinful act upon these elements of moral and spiritual strength, of permanent character for good.

1. The approval of conscience is not merely destroyed, it is changed into positive guilt and remorse.

2. Peace is not merely destroyed, it is converted into fear, apprehension.

3. The love of the good is not only destroyed, but converted into positive antagonism, hatred of good and God. Milton goes still further when he represents Satan as saying, "Evil, be thou my good," for this seems to be positive delight in badness. Here then, as a direct result of the act of sin, is a complete perversion of all the elements of man's moral nature. The good conscience becomes emphatically an evil conscience. The fallen state is thus very far from

being a mere negation, a pure loss, a return to pure nature. It is a positive, spiritual *corruption*.

But there is also another aspect of permanent evil character, a bondage as well as a corruption. We have already described the antithesis of the inward and the outward which exists in the state of development and probation, and which in furnishing the opportunity for probation, renders both sin and holiness possible. Now, in the probational state the outward influence and the inner power which rules over and uses it are commensurate, the outer influence sufficient to call forth the full strength of the inner power, but the inner power sufficient to rule over and subdue all outer things. And this expresses the normal relation of the inner and the outer in our unfallen state. But the first act of sin inverted this relation, and the inversion becomes a permanent character. Henceforth, outward influences rule. Sin dwells in the members. The flesh is its stronghold.

Thus we come to this inevitable conclusion as to the results of sin, that the very constitution of our nature which was given us for the attainment, development and perfection of holiness becomes by its perversion the means of the origination, perpetuation and permanence of sin with all its terrible evils.

But in forming our conception of sin in character, as the result of the individual act of sin, our induction must not be from the facts of our own consciousness alone. We might appeal to universal history

and literature, but we shall inquire only of the historic record of inspiration. There we shall find in the most explicit terms a doctrine of universal individual sin. This is asserted very early in the moral history of the race. (Gen. vi. 12, etc.) It is presented as the result of the widest experience. (Psa. xiv. 2, 3.) It is represented as an inevitable fact. (Prov. xx. 9; 1 Kings viii. 66.) It is as explicitly asserted in the New Testament teaching as in the Old. (Rom. iii. 9-12, v. 12, etc.; Gal. iii. 22; 1 John i. 8-10, v. 19.) "All have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God." But the teaching of Scripture is equally explicit as to the fact of

#### HEART SIN,

or sin in character, which, as we have seen from the very constitution of our moral nature, flows from sin in act. Very early in the history of the race it is presented as a growing and terrible result of the sins of successive generations of men (Gen. vi. 5, 11, 12), and even after the flood it is still represented as a characteristic of man as man (viii. 21). See also Job xiv. 4, xv. 14-16; Psa. li. 10; Eccles. ix. 3; Isa. liii. 6; Jer. xvii. 9. The teaching of Christ on this subject is very explicit. (Matt. vii. 15-17.) There is in human nature a corrupt tree bringing forth evil fruit. So under another figure in Luke vi. 45. In Matt. xv. 18, 19 we have the terrible catalogue of evil propensities which defile the man. So in Matt. xxiii. 25, etc., the worst sin is the vile character

within the Pharisee. So St. Paul, in Rom. i. 24, glances at the awful corrupting power of sin in character as leading to the very vilest crimes, crimes impossible as a first sin. With this he contrasts the true inward keeping of law in chapter ii. 29. Again in chapters vi. 16, etc., and vii. 14-24, he depicts the well-known slavery to sin which he presents as characteristic of man as man. Another striking picture of heart sin he gives in the list of the works of the flesh. (Gal. v. 19-21.) St. John is no less explicit in his testimony to this doctrine of heart sin. (1 John ii. 15, 16.) The love of the world and the lust of the flesh are the strength of sin.

The doctrine of heart sin is thus clearly the teaching of Scripture as well as of experience, a teaching which has its attestation in the facts of our own moral nature. There is a wrong that *I am*, as well as that which *I do*, and for both the one and the other conscience and Scripture declare us guilty before God.

But the question next arises, is this wrong that I am primarily the work of my own sin? or, does it belong to a condition of the race resulting from the fall under the primitive probation? This question leads us next to consider sin in relation to the race, or

#### HEREDITARY SIN.

There are two laws under which man has been created in the order of God, the law of heredity and the law of solidarity. The first of these is strictly a



natural law operating as cause and effect. But like all natural law it must be controlled by moral law which operates by the bond of justice. The law of solidarity on the other hand is a moral law, in fact the moral law under which heredity affects moral beings. The inductive proof of this law which enters alike into the doctrine of the atonement and the fall, we will consider again in the study of the Atonement. We shall at present use it only as already established under the head of responsibility, and proceed to deal with the results which follow under these two laws from man's fall into sin under the primitive probation. These results may be summed up under two heads.

1. Under the law of solidarity in moral responsibility, penal results accrue to all the race.

2. Under the law of heredity which ethically is based on the law of solidarity, depravity descends to all the race.

These two facts are fully set forth by St. Paul in Rom. v. 12-19. A general principle of family and national solidarity and heredity is recognized in many passages in the Old Testament, to some of which we have already referred. Our Lord himself sets forth the depravity as hereditary in John iii. 5-7: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." But from St. Paul's expanded statement we may gather the elements of the doctrine more fully. These are:

1. That by the sin of the first man, sin, both as a

generic principle and as a penalty, entered the race. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." (V. 12a.) "Through one trespass (it) came upon all men unto condemnation." (V. 18a.) So Ephesians ii. 3: "Were by nature the children of wrath even as the rest."

2. That sin and the condemnation have so extended to the whole race. "Death passed upon all men." "All sinned." (V. 12b.) So 1 Cor. xv. 22: "In Adam all die." It is a well-known teaching of St. Paul that death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23), and so here universal death is not the result of universal individual sin, but the penalty of the first sin extended to the whole race. "In Adam all die." "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression." (V. 14.) But we have already seen that this law of solidarity in moral responsibility has its limits. When we say then that under it penalty attaches to the whole race, we are not thereby justified in asserting this in an unlimited sense. We must therefore ask definitely, what penalty, and how far extended, rests upon the whole race through the sin of the one man? Paul's first element of penalty is "death." This of course includes physical death. He also uses the term death for that conscious separation from God and condemnation in His sight which arises on the commission of sin. This is spiritual death. Paul does not use the term as synonymous

with depravity. He has other words to express this. Nor does he use it separately in the sense which has been defined as eternal death. We are not therefore justified, from the words of Paul, in asserting that as a result of Adam's fall all men are held "liable to the pains of hell forever." But Paul himself brings out his meaning more fully in verse 16. He there uses three words to express the actual penal consequences of the one transgression, *κριμα εις κατακριμα*. In these words we think we may find both the extent and the limit of penal consequences of Adam's transgression, especially as the latter part of the expression is repeated in verse 18, as our translators all take it as an abbreviation for the whole. The first word here used, *κριμα*, denotes the judgment or sentence against sin in the simplest form. The second term denotes that sentence in absolute manner, the final sentence. The preposition *εις* which connects them denotes always tendency, a movement from one to the other, in this case a moral force. It is thus evident that Paul has before his mind two sentences or judgments, a present and temporal judgment, under which we now stand; but beyond this a final and absolute judgment or condemnation to which the other may lead. But how does it so lead? Clearly from Paul's point of view through our own probational acts. Everywhere in Paul's teaching the final condemnation is based upon our own works. (Rom. i. 18, ii. 4-6.) Even the temporal form of spiritual death, the con-



scious personal separation from God, comes through personal transgression. (Rom. vii. 9.) But again this personal transgression springs from "the sin which dwelleth in me." (V. 17.) This is "the sin," which entered by the one man and which thus includes sinful character, lust, as well as act and personal guilt. Now, in many other passages, but especially in our Lord's teaching already quoted, this sinful character comes to us through the law of heredity, a natural law: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Thus in Scripture teaching the actions of the natural law and of the moral law are inseparable. Under the moral law sin works out its own penalty by natural law, and yet this natural law is itself based on moral law. The disobedience of one made many sinners. This is the moral side. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." This is the natural side. But both express the same fact.

We can now sum up Paul's teaching on sin in relation to the race:

1. The disobedience or transgression of one man introduced sin into the world, *i.e.*, "the sin," sin as a generic principle.

2. "The sin" which thus entered is not only the fact of sin, but also an indwelling principle of sin, springing up into life in every man and bringing him into "bondage under a law of sin and death."

3. Sin brought death, and both passed through unto all men; hence all have sinned.

4. But this passage of sin and death is a Divine judgment, a sentence of moral law, and its result leads to an absolute and final sentence.

We have thus three facts—the universal depravity of the race, the universal sin of the race, and a Divine judgment of the race, expressed in physical death—as the just result of “one transgression.” Paul leads us further and presents us with a clear idea of the extent, as well as of the fact, of this depravity. This indwelling sin is so powerful that “to do that which is good is not present with me.” The knowledge of the good, the approval of it, and even a certain delight in it, are not excluded by this sin which dwelleth in me, but the preformance is, and self-deliverance is impossible. This is Paul’s doctrine or measure of “total depravity”—the expression he himself does not use. His term is, “I am carnal sold under sin,” and “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Such a state of affairs would, of course, imply the termination of all probation, as the essential condition of ability is here wanting, and Paul clearly reinstates the race in probation only in Christ Jesus, who over against this law of sin and death brings in a law of the spirit of life. Under the contemporaneous action of these opposing moral forces, sin from Adam and grace from Christ, Paul regards men as now living in a new probation, the terms of which must follow our study of the Atonement.

## THE END OF SIN.

It will be seen from the foregoing considerations that the results of sin are a *part of its very nature*, so that one has profoundly said that God punishes sin by sin. Sin is its own penalty. The man who sins against the Holy Spirit "hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal sin." Is, then, sin, with all its varied forms of evil, eternal? This is the most terribly painful question which the mind of man can approach.

1. The sinful act once done cannot be undone. It has introduced a new thing, a wrong, into God's universe. And this wrong necessitates a new, a defensive position on the part of every being in the universe. That position is justice. Justice is the right relation of God and the universe toward sin—a relation of separation and penalty. And it seems to me that all our intuitional judgments represent this relation as a finality. It cannot but be, inasmuch as the fact of sin cannot now not be. God and all His holy ones can stand in no other relation to sin than that which is represented by the word justice. And, inasmuch as the fact of sin is a fact forever, justice must represent an unchangeable attitude of the Divine nature. Justice is the final and immutable right relation toward sin.

And this justice is perfect. It is absolutely right. It satisfies. It seeks for nothing beyond itself. It

yields its claims to no other demand. It cannot do so. Hence justice must abide. Now, so far as the light of reason goes, this is the end. God is thus in the right relation toward the sinner as a sinner. The universe is in the right relation toward the sinner and toward a just God. And the sinner himself feels in his inmost conscience that he stands in the only right relation as a sinner toward all beings and things. And thus justice instantly counteracts sin by establishing a new harmony of moral relations. Justice is right harmony with sin. This is the first conceivable end of sin.

2. But this sin is mine—mine own act, that which I have created out of myself. Now, if justice is the immutable attitude of God toward sin, it must be the immutable attitude of God toward me, unless I can be severed from my sin. I must be the bearer of my sin. Here enters that unfathomable mystery of the atonement by which the immutability of God's right relation to sin is maintained, and yet the sinner is set free. His sins are no more imputed unto him. Justice toward all sinful acts is then *final* and *eternal*. But, what of *the sinful state*! It is evident that justice represents the right relation of God and all holy ones toward the sinful state as well as toward the sinful act. But a state may not be like an act, necessarily immutable. It continues, and hence may change, unless change be, in the nature of the case, impossible. Now, we will take for granted, inasmuch

as it is not disputed, that the sinful state may be rectified. And thus we have full deliverance from sin by (1) Eternal justice towards the sinful act set forth by the God-man himself bearing penalty; (2) Severance of the sinner from his sinful act; (3) Change of the sinful state. This is the second conceivable end to sin—salvation from it through atonement and redemption.

3. A third alternative has been submitted by some: the cessation from existence of the sinner, and in this the consummation of justice against the sin. But this is a conclusion at which a spiritual *philosophy* can never arrive. This cessation of existence must be either the act of God or the effect of sin. Revelation alone, not philosophy, could affirm the first. Hence *we* could have no right to predicate it as a possible alternative. The second, cessation of existence, *as the result of sin*, implies disorganization. For sin affects *relations*, not *substance or essential attribute*. Hence, if sin affects the existence of a spirit, as spirit, *it must be by changing the relation, of the parts of the spirit, to each other*. We have freely admitted and included in our theory of sin a change of the relations of the spirit to its environment, to the body. And this does result in disorganization—severance of the soul from the body. But in the substance and attributes of the spirit we see no such change of relations. Every attribute is perverted, *i.e.*, under the new moral relations to God



and the universe, peace becomes fear ; joy, pain ; love, hate ; a good conscience, an evil one. But this is not a disorganization. Here are *no parts* in conflict with each other, but the *same one* spirit, unchanged in substance or attribute, miserably putting forth its energies in opposition to its normal and happy relations to God and the universe. There is no prophecy of annihilation in the spiritual results of sin.

In looking then at the ultimate destiny of the sinner, we are shut up to the alternatives of *salvation* or *eternal justice*. Taking the salvation of some to be a fact of experience as well as of revelation, the final question is resolved into this: Are there any limitations to the possibility of salvation such as may leave some spirits finally and forever under the justice of God ? If so, what are these limitations ?

We may take for granted that if there are such limitations they arise from the moral *order* of the *universe*, and are not in any sense *arbitrary*. And if so, then we are likely to find some indication of them in the moral nature of man. Such limitations we think we find :

1. In the moral nature of man.
2. In his subsequent moral acts.

1. The moral nature of man requires a *probation* in redemption no less than in his original estate. Without this he would not be man. His destiny must be determined by the *terms* of his *probation*, whatever under the redemptive economy those terms



may be. To save him without probation would be to *annihilate* the *present constitution of his moral nature*, and that, so far as we know, is to annihilate the man.

2. This limitation of salvation to conditions consistent with man's moral nature is still further specified by the subsequent acts of this moral agent. No redemptive scheme can change the moral quality of actions. The man is still free, and if in the new probation he choose sin, no power in the universe can make sin to be *other* than sin. There must, therefore, continue to exist the *possibility* of a final relation to justice, not merely of all sin, but of *some sinners*.

The most popular mode of escape from this conclusion is the indefinite extension of probation. By such extension they cherish the hope that the far-off result will be the universal restoration, so that justice will finally appear only toward the *sin that was*, not toward the *sinner that is*. Now, two questions at once arise here. First, would such an indefinite extension of the term of probation be likely to secure the result contemplated? Secondly, is such an extension consistent with the moral constitution of our nature? Procrastination is the thief of virtuous effort—the strongest opposing power to man's redemption. Indefinite extension of the term of probation, therefore, means a weakening of the moral forces for good. And if so, then what have we to hope from an indefinite extension? Certainly nothing whatever, unless with the

far-off future into which it reaches there come new and mightier moral forces for salvation than God's love in Christ now furnishes. This single argument might almost be deemed conclusive. But when we come to look at the subject in the light of the moral constitution of our nature, the possibility of such indefinite extension seems excluded.

Both reason and revelation teach us that the first probation of man was determined by a single act of sin. "By one offence judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." Doubtless under the redemptive system the term is extended. But is the extension definite or indefinite? We believe it to be definite or limited—

1. Because indefinite extension in one direction would seem to imply a like extension in the other direction. If our moral constitution may admit of indefinite continuance in sin without reaching that permanence of moral character which excludes hope, then there would seem to be a possibility of like indefinite continuance in holiness without attaining that permanence of character which would be eternally secure. If this be not so, then we must conclude that the moral nature of the sinner is different from that of the saved, or else that sin and holiness are not the exactly parallel opposites which we have found them to be.

Again, the relation of the new probation to our moral nature seems to render indefinite extension

impossible. The original probation was in the antithesis of external influences to the directive power of conscience within. The new probation is the appeal of *external* influences to conscience and the will, in opposition to the subjective power of evil. Man's probation is now due to influences for good from without. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Now, this would be no probation, unless the influences for good from without were sufficient so far to counteract the power of evil within, as to leave man free, under the direction of conscience, to choose the good. The influences from without must not *force* the will, but release it from the bondage of sin—set it once more *free*. Now, what is the influence from without which comes to save man from his sinful self?—Is it not God's love in Christ? Certainly, the advocates of an indefinite extension of probation will admit that this is the principal moral influence of Christianity, since they especially are anxious to dispense with all ideas of hell and its fear. But when once that love is fully presented to the sinner, and he is thus brought to the very crisis of his probation, what is the result if that influence is rejected? Certainly, by that fact, the probation is ended. For the wilful rejection of love is the destruction of its influence and the strengthening of sin, and this cannot go far without placing the sinner *beyond the limits of probation*. God may,

it is true, devise new probations which we know not of, but of these certainly we can have neither knowledge nor hope. "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." This seems to be the language of reason, as well as of inspiration.

So strongly does this argument press that the only hope of those who press for an indefinite extension of probation seems to lie in the corrective power of punishment. Let us consider whether there be grounds for hope here.

By punishment is of course intended suffering, and this suffering must be either from within or from without. It must find its cause in the spirit or in its environment. Against a suffering which arises from the environment, *i.e.*, is inflicted from without, the advocates of broad theology are very much disposed to object, especially if that environment is in any way material. And yet the suffering which arises from environment is the only kind of suffering which can be corrective. If our view of the spirit's condition in the corruption and bondage of sin be correct, then by nothing which arises within itself can it be delivered. The power which sets it free must be *from without*. Now, that sufferings, from without, through the body or the circumstance of life, have, by Divine grace, their influence for good, I am free to admit. But

universal experience and, if time permitted the investigation, a true philosophy would show that this influence is confined within narrow limits, limits which certainly seem to be reached *within the bounds of this life*.

Some have conceived that in remorse is to be found the ground of an eternal hope. They say that remorse is a regret for, and hence a still lingering *love for the good* which has been lost. And, inasmuch as this remorse is the principal ingredient of the purely subjective suffering which sin entails, and as it may be conceived of as increasing with the lapse of progressive duration, it may become the *mighty motive* to repentance by which the sinner, whom God's chastening could not soften, and God's love could not draw, will be led back again to seek and find the right. Now, were this true, then out of man's sin itself would come his salvation, and the moral universe would be self-rectifying. It were answer enough to men who profess to believe the Bible, to ask, then why did Christ die?

But is there such an element of salvation in remorse? Does it not rather lead to the scorn of the good, hatred of it, utter antagonism to it. So thought John Milton when he put such words as—

“The unconquerable will  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,”

into the lips of the lost fiend.

There is, it is true, a remorse which accompanies salvation—the remorse of a heart broken into contri-



tion by love. The child whom a mother's tears and love has rescued from disobedience is filled with remorse as it views the hideousness of its sin against such tender love. But this is not the remorse of the soul *that tramples on love and has persistently rejected its full and final appeal*. The remorse of such is not full of contrite tears, but of impotent rage and eternal hate. It is indeed "impossible to renew them unto repentance."

The conclusion, then, seems inevitable that the extension of probation beyond *the decisive rejection of the Gospel* is a moral impossibility. The word of Gospel salvation must prove a savor of life unto life, or else of death unto death. It is in itself decisive. It judges. It *determines probation*. As to how God deals with those who have not in their earthly probation been brought to the test of the Gospel, it is not for us to speculate. The book of Revelation, here, is silent; and we cannot so place ourselves in their position as to find subjective data for the satisfactory examination of the subject.

But to this definite conclusion we seem clearly led:

1. That the end of all sin is to be placed under final justice.

2. That the Gospel must finally determine all probation; and

3. That when this is preached to every creature, the END must come when God's unerring judgment and justice shall fix forever the right moral relations of the universe.



# THE ATONEMENT.



# THE ATONEMENT.

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By the Atonement we understand that act or work of our Lord Jesus Christ centring in His death, whereby the forgiveness of sins is possible to God, and for man.

We do not propose to give an historical exposition of the Church's apprehension of this work. Nor do we attempt a polemic discussion of any one of the various theories of the work of Christ which have obtained in the Church. We shall rather approach the Atonement as a fact clearly set forth in the New Testament, a fact upon which the spiritual life of the Church universal is founded, the central fact of Christianity; and our object will be to apprehend this fact in the light of its statement by Christ and the apostles, and by the principles of a sound moral philosophy.

We have thus limited ourselves to the New Testament study of the subject, not because important light may not be derived from the Old Testament, but first, because the New Testament contains the most complete statement, embracing all and more than all contained in the Old; second, because the New Testament statement refers directly and primarily to the work of Christ, the statement of the Old to the sacri-

ficial and prophetic types by which it was foreshadowed and the way for it prepared. The fulfilment is always more easily understood than the prophecy. We therefore cultivate brevity and certainty by adopting this method.

We shall inquire—

1. What is the moral constitution of the world under which atonement is possible?

2. What is the act or work by which atonement is effected—its moral quality, and its valency or force as an atonement?

3. The relation of this atonement to human probation and salvation.

#### I. THE MORAL CONSTITUTION UNDER WHICH ATONEMENT IS POSSIBLE.

This is very clearly set forth by St. Paul in the fifth chapter of Romans, verses 12-19 inclusive: "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,

abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgement came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass the judgement came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

Many other passages touch upon or harmonize with the ideas here presented, but as this is the most direct and complete statement, we will formulate our doctrine from it.

1. It sets forth as a fact that it is possible for the whole race to be affected for evil or for good, for sin or for salvation, by the act of one member of that race.

This implies (a) a moral unity of the race; (b) a united or common responsibility as distinguished from individual responsibility.

In proof of this common responsibility Paul cites the fact that it has taken effect even where individual responsibility was not fully developed (vv. 13, 14). It

thus precedes and underlies our individual responsibility. This law of our moral constitution which makes the whole responsible for the individual act, appears not merely in this statement of one case by St. Paul, but in the whole experience of human life. We find humanity everywhere presenting itself in these moral unities. The family is the fundamental unity. Any one of its members may bring untold blessing or woe upon the whole. This responsibility especially, though not exclusively, devolves upon the parents. The children suffer for the sins of the parents, or they are blessed by their virtues. Our whole law of inheritance is based upon it, and thus our jurisprudence recognizes its essential justice. But these moral unities appear in wider circles. The village, the community, the tribe, the city, the nation, all are examples extending the law until we are prepared by the facts of history to accept Paul's statement that the "transgression of one man brought judgement (penal consequences) upon all" the race, and that "through the righteousness of one a free gift came to all" the race. This passage implies (*c*) that in the history of mankind there actually has been a probation of the race as a race, based upon this moral unity and common responsibility, as well as a probation of each individual, and that this probation of the race is not only a continuous fact in the moral judgements of history, but had its definite historical result at the very origin of the race, in



consequence of which well-known penal results have descended to the whole race. It is on the basis of this law that he also affirms a second great probational event in the history of the race, out of which shall flow the world's salvation. The law of moral unity of common responsibility and of race probation is thus clearly established as a fact, both by this scriptural statement and by the observation of history, and its justice is recognized by the common consent of mankind.

One or two points of error, however, must be guarded against in our application and interpretation of this law.

1. It must not be so extended as to destroy individual probation. Paul, who is for us the chief expounder of this law, also teaches as the fundamental law of individual probation, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7.) So in the Epistle to the Romans, i. 18-21, and ii. 29: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God,

neither gave thanks." Here is a most complete exposition of universal individual responsibility and probation, which is not destroyed by any advantageous or adverse temporal conditions.

2. Upon this individual probation alone eternal consequences are made to depend. Romans ii. 6-10: "Who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God." In no single case is the race probation spoken of as the direct cause of eternal penalty to the individual. This is always and everywhere referred to the individual responsibility and probation. The consequences which flow from race probation belong to this life. They may largely affect the advantages or disadvantages of individual probation, but they are never spoken of as absolutely determining the individual probation, or supplanting or eliminating it. Notwithstanding Adam's sin or Christ's righteousness, each man must give account of himself to God, and for his own sin or good works be judged for eternity. The law of race responsibility is thus limited by the

law of individual responsibility, and finally merges into it. The race probation prepares for, lays the foundation of, and makes way for the final individual responsibility.

These are the facts of the case recognized in Scripture, evident in history and acknowledged as righteous by the common conscience of the race.

3. In studying the penal consequences which follow from race responsibility, and to which the whole race are held, we must distinguish clearly between natural and moral law. Natural law may be founded in moral law and may give effect to moral law, but it does not thereby become moral law. Natural law is an order of cause and effect, operated by the forces of nature; moral law is an order of right, operated by the principles of justice. The operation of a natural law may be counteracted by the force of nature upon which it depends; that of a moral law only by the principle of justice upon which it depends. A natural law, by the aid of which effect is given to a moral law, may be suspended, and yet the moral law itself remain in full force in other ways. In the same way a natural law, by which effect is given to a moral law, may have a much wider scope than this particular moral end which it serves in this particular case. Heredity and death are both natural laws used in giving effect to a moral law in the probation of the race, but not to be confounded with the moral law

itself. The bearing of this upon the doctrine of the Atonement will appear presently.\*

The passage upon which we have based our study of the moral constitution of the race, sets forth two supreme events in the race probation. One is the sin of the first man, in consequence of which penal consequences rest upon the whole race. The other is the work of Christ, in consequence of which redemption comes to the race. This last we must now consider.

## II. THE WORK OR ACT OF CHRIST BY WHICH ATONEMENT IS EFFECTED, ITS MORAL CHARACTER, AND ITS VALENCY.

It will already be anticipated that, under this moral constitution of our race which so binds us together in moral unity that each can bless or ban the whole, if the Son of God is to save us, He must become one with us, *i.e.*, He must first give himself to us. Under

\* We have not delayed to consider the justice of this moral constitution in itself. It is certainly a fact in human life. It is, we think, sufficiently approved as God's right order by a consideration of the wonderful blessings which flow from it. It is the foundation of all the altruistic virtues. Every man under it becomes his brother's keeper. Individual responsibility without it could not attain its most God-like development. If it made the fall possible, it also made possible salvation. If it has entailed a long heritage of ills, it has raised up a countless army of workers, together with Christ, in saving others even by dying themselves. The fact that man's sin turns it into a curse, cannot reflect upon the great and wise and good intent and glorious final result of the purpose of God.

the Divine order, the incarnation is the first step to the redemption of the race. This our Lord himself expresses in the clearest terms : "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

But the incarnation is neither the redemption nor the atonement, though it leads to and provides the means for both. We shall use the term redemption to express the value, or valency, or effect of Christ's work towards man ; atonement, to express its valency towards God. It is the redemption of man, it is atonement before God for men. For both, the incarnation is, of necessity, under God's order, the first step. He must take upon Him, in order that He may take hold of, our nature. To be a priest He must be made like unto His brethren. Heb. ii. 14-17 : "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same ; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." This passage clearly states the necessity of the incarnation both for the work of



redemption or deliverance of man, and for that of atonement or propitiation of God. The moral ground of the first necessity is already apparent. Under the law of moral unity it is only as man that He can act for man. But under the same law, by this very act of becoming man, He makes himself responsible to the penalties which under that law rest upon all the race. He not only as one of the race becomes entitled to convey to the race the benefits of His work, but He must at the same time suffer the penal consequences of sin which rest upon the race, and which claim Him with all the rest of men for their satisfaction. "In Adam all die." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) The penal consequence of the first sin descending to the whole race is expressed in that. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." And so in the passage now before us the incarnation is spoken of as His taking part in the mortal elements of our nature, "flesh and blood," that through death which thus becomes not only possible, but was indeed by the law demanded of Him, "he might destroy," etc.

Let us now turn to another remarkable passage in which this act of Christ is set forth in all its steps and sequences from the pre-existent glory with the Father to the final mediatorial glory on the throne of the universe. Phil. ii. 6-11: "Also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the like-



ness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here are the successive steps of this work :

1. He thought not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, to be held fast as a robber holds his prey.

2. He emptied himself.

3. He took the form of a servant.

4. He was made in the likeness of men.

5. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient, *i.e.*, came under law.

6. He carried this even to the extent of death, yea, even the death of the cross ; *i.e.*, to the utmost demand of the law upon man as a sinner.

The intimate relation in thought of this passage with our Lord's own words may almost justify us in regarding the one as an expansion of the other. In each the minister, the servant, appears, in each the giving of His life. It will be seen that the Apostle includes in this one great presentation not only the death of Christ (that is indeed the supreme culmination), but with it His whole life, summed up into one great act of sacrifice beginning in eternity itself.

But that our statement of the work itself may be more complete, let us place beside this comprehensive exposition other passages of the New Testament which state the essential element or elements in Christ's redeeming and atoning work.

1. Those which speak of His giving or offering himself. (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. vii. 27, ix. 14, 25, 28.)

2. Those which speak of His giving or offering His life for us—laying down His life for us. (Matt. xx. 28; John x. 11, 15, 17, xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16.) By the side of these may be placed the many passages which speak of redemption through His blood, the sprinkling of His blood, etc., dying for us, suffering for us.

3. Those which speak of Christ's sufferings as penal, *i.e.*, as borne as the penalty of sin. These are peculiarly important as linking His sufferings with the law of human responsibility, and distinguishing them from the sufferings of a martyr or witness for the truth. (Heb. ix. 28; 1 Pet. ii. 24, iii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Rom. iv. 25, but especially Gal. iii. 10-14.) "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in

them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The curse is the penalty of broken law (v. 10). "Christ became a curse" on our behalf "for us."

Let us now gather up the scriptural elements of this work of Christ.

First. The pretemporal. He counted it not a thing to be held fast the being on an equality with God.

Second. The all-embracing act. He gave himself.

Third. The successive steps: (1) He emptied himself; (2) He took the place of a servant; (3) He became man; (4) Obedient, or subject to law; (5) As man He obeyed unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

Note especially how these passages link His death, (1) with His becoming man (Heb. ii. 14, 15); (2) with His obedience to law (Phil. ii. 8), and (3) with the penalty of law (Gal. iii. 13), thus directly linking His death to the moral constitution under which our race is placed.

NOTE.—It is going beyond the legitimate force of these passages to contend that Christ suffered the penalty of any individual sin, or of the personal sins of any individual man, or the united penalties of the sins of all men, or of any class of men, or the equivalent for these penalties, or the anger of God, or the torments of the lost. There is not the remotest reference to any of these things in any of

these passages. On the other hand, God with this Son declares himself as always well pleased, never more so than when He was fulfilling the will of the Father by obeying unto death even the death of the cross. If we are asked, What then is the meaning of Gethsemane and the cry of Calvary? we turn to Heb. v. 7-9: "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." He was truly man. As a man He felt all the bitterness of death in its most cruel form. As a man He needed to be saved out of death. Even though the Son of God, yet was He disciplined in obedience (as all men are under our moral order) by the things which He suffered. He suffered death, the universal penalty of sin appointed to all men in this life, nothing more, but nothing less. He tasted death for every man. Not "in our stead," for the preposition can scarcely be held in sound scholarship to have that significance, certainly not to be limited to it, but "*on our behalf.*" Those who think that this is not enough have never realized what it is for man to die.

But with the historic fact thus clearly defined before us, we must next turn to consider this redeeming and atoning work or act in its moral character.

First. It is an act or work of infinite *charity or love*. It is love to all sinners. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) It is love to His Church, His own, His friends. (Eph. v. 25; John xiii. 1, xv. 13.) Love to every individual. (Gal. ii. 20.) It is infinite love. (Eph. iii. 18.)

Second. It is this love *obeying* the infinite love of God the Father. (John iii. 16, iv. 34, vi. 38-40; 1 John iv. 8-10; Rom. v. 8.)

Third. It is love making *infinite sacrifice* to fulfil

this love and yield this obedience. (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5, etc.; John xvii. 20-26.)

Fourth. It is love sacredly *fulfilling all law*. (Matt. iii. 15.) As the righteous will of the Father. (Matt. xxvi. 39, etc.; Matt. v. 17, etc.; Gal. iv. 3, 4, etc.)

It is thus the world's supreme work of righteousness, including every element which goes to make up the beauty of holiness as the highest and greatest thing in the universe, and as infinitely precious before God.

We now come to the greatest question, Wherein lies the power of this work as an atonement before God? as the propitiation for our sins? How does it make it possible for God to forgive sin?

First. Note carefully what is to be accomplished by the atonement. It is not simply the remission of penalty. It is not the allowing of the sinner to escape punishment. It is true forgiveness. It is the bringing of the sinner back into his place in the heart of God, it is God's receiving him again as His child. Read the 15th of St. Luke for Christ's own presentation of this. The atonement must make it possible for God to forgive sins.

Again, this does not imply that there is not in the heart of God the grace, the love which desires to receive the lost child back. This is the very fountain-head of the atonement, "God so loved the world." But it does imply that there is a bar, something



which hinders God's love from taking effect. Now, this bar must lie either—

(a) In man the sinner, who will not or cannot be reconciled to God because he chooses to remain in sin; or

(b) In the necessities of the moral government of God, whose authority must be maintained over the creatures who have not sinned; or

(c) In the nature of God himself, who, because He is holy and just, cannot forgive sin without atonement. In other words, the atonement must enable God to be "just and the justifier of him that believeth." (Rom. iii. 26.)

We do not hesitate to accept the latter as the only possible final ground of the necessity of the atonement, first, on the basis of the passage of Scripture just quoted, and again, because in the ultimate analysis both the other grounds must resolve themselves into this.

1. Why should the persistence of the sinner in his sins be a bar to forgiveness? Either because God as holy and just cannot receive such into His favor, or because to do so would undermine the authority of His government. The first, then, necessarily falls into the second or third.

2. But why should the government of God be undermined by the forgiveness of the sinner either penitent or impenitent? Either because it indicates a lack of power in God to punish, or because it



indicates a lack of disposition. In the first case, the authority of God's government would rest on fear, a position which cannot be accepted by those who believe with St. John that God is love. In the second case, the authority would be undermined because of lack of disposition, *i.e.*, of justice, of inflexible will to do right. That is, God's government would be undermined because injustice would be done, and it is maintained not as a matter of expedience, but of right. If then we believe in right as an eternal and primary principle in God, and do not regard it as a secondary thing, a wise form of goodness, then in this lies the final bar to forgiveness, and the atonement must make it *right* for God to forgive sin. If it is right, then it cannot shake the throne of God founded on the right.

How does the work of Christ make it right for God to forgive sin? Our question as thus carried back excludes for answer all moral influence theories of the atonement. Moral influence expresses the relation of the atonement to man, most important in its own place. We are asking, What is its relation to God in His own attributes? especially in His attribute of justice, and to that attribute as ultimate, *i.e.*, viewing things as right in virtue of their own character, and not merely of certain consequences. If the penalty of sin and the condemnation of the sinner are simply expedients for the maintenance of government, then maintain the authority of government in some other way and you may dispense with them. But if they are of eternal equity,

### HOW DOES THE ATONEMENT SECURE EQUITY IN THE PARDON OF THE SINNER?

The underlying principle of the various attempts to answer this question will appear from three examples:

1. Anselm says sin robs God of His just honor. The atonement pays back this honor to God as it would have been paid back had we ourselves suffered the penalty.

2. Later on the Calvinistic theologians developed this into the substitutionary theory. Christ suffered the exact penalty or the equivalent for the penalty of the sins of the elect, and hence they are released.

3. Finally by the use of an analogy or metaphor this was converted into the commercial view of the atonement. Sin is a debt. Christ paid the debt. We are released.

Before investigating the Scriptural foundations of these answers we may submit them to analysis to see whether they really supply what we need.

1. Anselm's view finds the guilt of sin in that it robs God. But is that its full guilt? Is not the right, that moral equity which is in God and in all His works, the very principle which demands that amends should be made to God's honor? The evil of sin is more than the violation of personal right even of God. It is the violation of an eternal principle in God and in all His works. That principle not only enjoins the right and forbids the wrong, but it attaches

to right its equitable reward, and to wrong its equitable penalty, not as an expedient, but as a matter of right. Now, that which right demands is not that the wrong be repaid (that it does demand wherever possible, but here it may be impossible), but that a new right should be carried into effect, viz., *the equity of penalty*. It was this phase of the problem which developed the substitution theory of the reformers. They held that in the satisfaction of the penalty of justice, the suffering of penalty may be transferred to a substitute. If the substitute suffers the penalty, then the original transgressor may go free. The principle upon which this view is based is not materially altered, whether we consider the penalty as identical or as equivalent in value. In either case it is held that satisfaction is made, the debt is paid.

It has been objected to this view, and very properly, that it involves a moral impossibility if taken in its extreme form of identical penalty. The penal consequences of sin are thus defined in the Shorter Catechism: "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever." With this catalogue before us the point seems well taken that it is impossible that Christ should have suffered all this. The greater part of those who hold this view in consequence fall back upon some form of equivalence.

2. But it is again objected that the very principle of substitution, instead of satisfying justice, violates justice; that guilt consists essentially of two elements, the *culpa*, or obligation to penalty, and the *poena*, or penalty itself; that while the latter may be transferred, the former in moral delinquency is personal and cannot be transferred; another cannot become blameworthy for my sin, and as the bond of justice which attaches penalty to sin lies in the blameworthiness, that bond cannot be satisfied, will not attach itself, even though another suffer the penalty; that in this respect there is an essential difference between sin and a debt. Another may place himself under obligation in justice for my debt. He cannot do so for my crime, except by becoming *particeps criminis*, and even then it is his own part in the crime for which he is responsible. Even in human law, where relative justice and the prevention of crime are the objects sought, this principle is not admitted in relation to crime, although freely applied to debt. Much less then could it apply in Divine law where absolute justice is demanded.

3. It is objected to this principle that if valid at all it secures not forgiveness conditioned on penitence and faith, but absolute discharge. This was freely accepted by the reformers who held that, this substitution taking place only on behalf of the elect, absolute discharge was secured; and that regeneration, justification and sanctification were but the effectual

operations by which the discharge was to be carried into effect, like the opening of the doors and the knocking off of the chains of the prisoners.

But while this objection is thus not absolutely fatal in Calvinistic theology, it is so in Arminian. We see no way in which the principle of substitution can be applied except as involving the absolute security of those for whom it is made. Forgiveness is no longer forgiveness, but legal discharge, under this conception. This is not what is required in atonement, *but a propitiation*, that is, righteous motive to, or reason for, *forgiveness*. It would thus seem that under the force of these two objections the substitutionary view must fall to the ground as failing to meet two essential Scriptural ideas, the satisfaction of Divine justice on the one hand, and a real Divine forgiveness conditioned on repentance and faith on the other. But insuperable as these objections appear, if Scripture sustained this view we should be forced to suspend judgement. But when we come to examine the Scriptural foundation for it, we think it will be found to be far from satisfactory.

The view is, however, supposed to be sustained by three classes of New Testament passages :

First. Those which speak of Christ dying for us, suffering for us, etc. One of the most striking of these is 1 Peter iii. 18: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." The idea of substitution



in this and all similar passages is supposed to lie in the preposition here used  $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$ . But the preposition  $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$  does not necessarily imply anything as to the manner of carrying the work into effect. It does assert that the *benefit* or *advantage* of the work of "the righteous" accrues to "the unrighteous." But it is reading into it more than its legitimate force to make it say that such benefit is further secured by an act in which the benefactor takes the place of the benefited. In the only two passages in the New Testament in which  $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$  was translated "instead of," viz., 2 Cor. v. 20, Phil. 13, the revised version has the more correct, "on behalf of." This does not imply any idea of substitution in person, but only in results or benefits.

Second. The next class of passages is that in which the preposition  $\alpha\nu\tau\iota$  is used. This is supposed to imply an absolute substitution. In this case no objection lies against the meaning assigned to the preposition. It certainly commonly signifies "instead of," "in the place of." And if in the passage in St. Peter just quoted, or in any similar passage, Christ had been said to have suffered or died,  $\alpha\nu\tau\iota\ \eta\mu\omega\nu$ , substitutionary suffering would have been strongly asserted. But this preposition is used only in three passages, and in all cases in the same connection of thought. These are Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45, and 1 Tim. ii. 6. If in the first two passages, which are in reality one saying of the Master, it had been said,



“to give his life,” or “to die,” *ἀντι ἡμῶν*, then the substitutionary theory could be founded on the words. But that is not said, but this, “to give his life as a ransom price instead of the many;” the substitution is not of the person who gave his life, but of the act, or the life given, as “a ransom price.” It is the ransom price which, *for the purpose of deliverance*, takes the place of the person delivered.

The same idea appears in the passage, “Who gave himself a ransom price instead *ὑπερ* (“on behalf of”) of all to be testified in due time.” You note the difference in terms: In the first, *ἀντι* “instead of” “*the many*” (redeemed); in the last, “a ransom price” to take the place, not “of all,” but “for the benefit of all.” In all these passages the thought centres not on *an atonement offered to God*, but on *a redemption provided for man*. Christ’s death is *the ransom price in our stead* as delivering us from sin, “*for the benefit of all*,” but *instead of all that believe*.

The word “ransom” expresses exactly and beautifully the power of Christ’s death toward man. But its valency toward God is expressed by the word “propitiation,” *ἱλαστήριον*, an entirely different idea, and we have no right to confuse the two, or to extend the figure of ransom beyond that which it directly illustrates, *our deliverance*. To ask to whom the ransom price was paid, is to carry the figure beyond its Scriptural use.

We are therefore led to carry our question back

once more to the New Testament for answer, and ask is there any light upon it? How does the work of Christ make it right or just for God to forgive sins? The answer can, we think, be found in the passages already quoted from Romans v. and Phil. ii.

In the first of these passages Paul is discussing this whole question, both of the fall and the recovery of man, from the ethical or moral standpoint. This certainly touches both its relation to God and man. It is the ethical quality, the wrong in sin, which makes it mighty towards God and man. So it is the ethical quality in Christ's work which makes it mighty toward God and man. The ethical quality in sin Paul expresses by two words. First, related to moral law, it is "*transgression*"; second, related to God, "*disobedience*." So the ethical quality of Christ's work he expresses by two corresponding words. Toward moral law or principle, it is *δικαιωμα*, the fulfilment of law, that which it prescribes; toward God it is "obedience." In transgression lies the condemning power of Adam's act; in righteousness, the restoring power of Christ's work; in disobedience that which offended God; in obedience, that which propitiates Him.

The other passage (Phil. ii. 6, etc.) sets forth the ethical side of the work of Christ as an example to us, and at the same moment as claiming from God the lofty dignity and right to the power which He exercises as Mediator. His mediatorial throne, His

power on earth to forgive sins, is the just reward of His infinite self-sacrifice in obedience to the loving command of that Father who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," who "sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." It is in virtue of the merit of His work, its infinite desert, that remission of sins is preached through His name among all nations. It is after He had finished this work, even before He ascended into heaven, that He himself said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." To the same effect are the words of St. Peter (Acts ii. 33, etc.), "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which ye see and hear," *i.e.*, the Spirit of sonship upon man.

The sum then of these passages is this, that God the Father, in reward of the loving obedience, and self-sacrifice, and fulfilment of the claims of law, of His Son, grants Him as just reward the power to dispense the forgiveness of sins and power to become the sons of God, in spite of the demerit of their sins, to all who believe in His name. It is not in virtue of individual substitutionary sacrifice, but in virtue of the merit of His obedience, and loving self-sacrifice, and fulfilment of law, even by death, that God has placed Him in that position of supreme mediatorial power as

our High Priest, in which He shall gather a company which no man can number, out of every people and tribe and nation, and that the Father forgives the sins of these for His name's sake, and makes them sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

To put it then in one word, it is not the suffering of an equivalent penalty which cancels sin, but the *merit* of a work of infinite *moral value*, which at once honors God by loving *obedience* to the command of His love, and by *laying down life at that command*, honors law by meeting its every *demand on Him as one with our race*. This makes it right for God, first, to enter into relations of mercy to the whole race, in whose nature and for whose sake this work was wrought; and second, to forgive and accept everyone who comes in His name for mercy.

In this way it is justice that satisfies justice. The higher justice not only counterweighs the lower, but lifts the scale in which the sinner stands weighted with his sins up to God and heaven. The link which binds the work of Christ, then, to God is the link of just reward. It is right to God *for Christ's sake* to forgive sins.

III. But we must now consider more fully the link which binds us to Christ's work.

We have already seen how Christ in the moral order of our united nature bound himself to us as a race by taking upon Him our nature. It was in

virtue of this that He was called on to suffer the final penalty of the sinning race, *i.e.*, death, and it is in virtue of this that He has opened up the mercy of God unconditionally to the whole race, and placed the whole race *on a new and gracious probation*. We have now to consider the terms of this probation, and how it carries us up into a *new and higher unity of humanity whose head is Christ*, and whose issues are eternal salvation. Before entering on this final relation of atonement, let us examine those Scriptures which set forth its unconditioned benefits in the gracious probation of the entire sinful race—

1. As an unconditional result of Christ's work there is a universal resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This universal resurrection is for the purpose of judgement. "We must all appear before the *judgement seat of Christ* that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) So also our Lord himself. John v. 28, 29: "Marvel not at this for the hour cometh when all that are in the tombs shall hear *his voice* and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgement." The universal resurrection is thus directly subservient to *a universal probation under the mediatorial authority of Christ*.

2. As an unconditional result of the work of Christ,



light comes to all men. John i. 9: "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This light founds probation. John iii. 19: "This is the judgement that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." Thus the work of Christ for our race provides the beginning and the ending of probation, universal light and universal judgement through that light.

3. Next we have in this work of Christ a universal provision of Divine grace. Titus ii. 12-14: "For the grace of God, saving for all men, hath been made manifest, instructing us" (*i.e.*, giving us moral light and discipline) "in order that," etc. Here then we have in connection with the atonement *a saving course of probational life and grace provided for all men.*

4. Next, in accordance with universal gracious provision of probation, we have provision for possible salvation of every man. John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." So 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Rom. v. 18, etc.

5. In accordance with this universal probation, and these provisions of light and grace and possible salvation, God wills and is working for the salvation of the world. 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 19: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who



willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times." "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

These are, according to Scripture, the universal provisions of the atonement, *i.e.*, its results. Let us see how they correspond to the universal results of Adam's sin, and hence how they may spring directly and unconditionally by the law of race unity from the work of Christ in our nature and on our behalf.

1. If universal death could come into the world as the result of the sin of one man, certainly, under the same law, and with equal or even greater justice, a universal resurrection may come as the result of the righteousness of one man.

2. If darkness, moral blindness, has fallen upon our world in Adam, surely truth, moral light, may come through Christ by the same law.

3. If a law of sin in our members has come to all through Adam, a law of grace through the Holy Spirit may come through Christ. (Acts ii. 17.)

4. If the sin of Adam brought the possibility of eternal condemnation to the whole world (Rom. v. 18), surely the righteousness of Christ may bring the possibility of salvation within the reach of all.

5. If the sin of Adam brought in a reign of sin and death, so the work of Christ brings in a kingdom of grace and life. (Rom. v. 21.)

Finally, if the sin of Adam destroyed the conditions and possibilities of the original probation granted to the race, surely on the same law the work of Christ may lay the foundations of a new and gracious probation under which men may rise to all the possibilities of their being.

We must now consider what that probation is, and how it is related to the atoning work of Christ.

Without entering into the nature of probation in general, which will be discussed in another paper, it is sufficient to note the fact so fully declared in Scripture, that the condition of the new probation is *faith*. (John iii. 18 ; Acts x. 43 ; Rom. iii. 21-26.) Here the Lord himself, speaking through John, and Peter and Paul unite. If at times repentance on the one side as the preparation for this faith, and baptism on the other as the profession of this faith, are associated with it, it is only as the perfecting of faith that they are so presented. Faith is the essential condition of the Christian probation.

Again, this faith is personally in Christ. The personal Saviour is the centre and object and foundation of this faith. Our Lord himself generally uses faith, the noun, in the absolute and generic sense. But the verb "believe" (*πιστευειν*), He occasionally applies to himself, "believing in," or "on me," though in the

synoptic gospels generally used in the absolute sense. But in St. John's Gospel, thirty-nine passages, about one-half of the whole number, give us "believe in or on Christ." Nearly this same proportion holds in the Act and Epistles. So in the Acts and the Epistles, the word faith, used absolutely in the large number of cases, is when the object is mentioned, in nineteen instances, "faith in or of Christ," in three, "faith in or toward God," and in one case, "faith in his (Christ's) blood." This fact makes it quite evident that to the mind of the New Testament writers, the personal Christ was the object of faith rather than any abstract conception of the Atonement, on the one hand, or any specific declaration of promise on the other. The Atonement was the work of Christ, and the promises were the words of Christ, and the faith which believed in *Him* included both. The single expression, "faith in his blood," does in one case point to the Atonement as the object of faith. There the Atonement is set forth as a propitiatory offering. "Whom God has set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood." So in the parallel passage: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus even this passage does not separate Christ from His work. He is the offering and the offerer, and "faith in his blood" is faith in himself, as He gives himself a propitiatory offering to God. All that we have already said about the moral value of His work applies directly to this offering and sacrifice.

According to the teaching of the New Testament, then, the new probation established by Christ's work for the whole race makes individual acceptance with God depend upon a continuous personal faith, which faith takes hold of Christ not only as giving himself for the whole world, but as giving "himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) How does this act of faith bring me thus into special and individual relation to Christ and His work for my salvation by the forgiveness of my sins?

We have already seen that by the general moral law, explained at the beginning of our study, the general benefits which flow to the race from the Atonement come through Christ's uniting himself to the race, restoring it to all the possibilities of spiritual life. It is under the same law that each individual is personally linked to Christ for the personal benefits of the Atonement. Faith is the instrument of union with Christ. "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith," and we by faith are grafted into Him, the living vine. We are "members of his body," we are "his brethren," we are "his saints," "his elect," "his own," "his peculiar people," "his church." All these easily recognized Scripture terms express an inner unity with Christ, in virtue of which the full benefits of the Atonement are conferred, no longer as a matter of universal unconditioned grace, but as a matter of gracious probation. "If children, heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him that we

may be also glorified together." It is at this point that the Church, for nearly fifteen centuries, has been divided into two opposing camps; the one, and in all the ages by far the larger part, holding that the entrance into this higher unity is truly probational; the other that it is absolutely fixed and effected by God. In discussing this problem the advocates of the necessitarian view have always had this advantage, that the substitutionary theory of atonement in its very nature implied a fixed and determined number whose sins were borne, in whose stead Christ suffered, and whose sins were cancelled by His sufferings. On the other hand, those who have maintained the probational view have the advantage, first, of the inner consciousness of responsibility which every man feels, and from which he cannot set himself free by any consideration of his moral conditions; and secondly, of the entire tenor of Scripture which certainly supports the idea that, under the Gospel, man is in a truly probational relation to God and to eternal destiny. This question presents itself under another topic of theology and must there be discussed. It is only necessary here to ask, Does the view of the valency of the Atonement, and of its relation to the race and to the individual, which we have here presented, lay the foundation for a probational or for a necessitated personal salvation?

First. There can be no doubt that the merit of Christ's work calls for its reward. That reward is



all the fulness of Divine love, grace and promise to His own. These are assured to His people by the justice as well as the love of the Father. To those who are in Christ Jesus, the immutability of God assures "no condemnation." In Christ we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us in the Gospel. But while the relation between Christ's work and His reward is thus unalterably sure, it is a great mistake to suppose it capable of being weighed, measured, or numbered, or equated with the demerits or wants of any number of sinners. Christ would have His reward in the infinite love, faithfulness and grace of the Father in the salvation of *one sinner*, and *nothing less than the merits of Christ could save that one sinner*. Those same merits needed for the salvation of *one sinner* are at the same moment, and by the very same virtue, *adequate to the salvation of all the countless myriads of the race*. It is this personal character of the work of Christ which makes it capable of *unlimited application*. "He is the author of eternal salvation unto *all them that obey Him*." (Heb. v. 9.) Every time that a sinner comes to God in His name, He is still "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.) While, therefore, the merit of Christ's work is immutably certain in its efficacy, and unlimited in its application, that application is, by its



very nature, capable of control by probational conditions, in fact must be controlled by conditions of some kind. It is capable of unlimited application. It is applied only to those who are Christ's. In this all are agreed. The only question is, How do we become Christ's—by a determining decree of God, or by probational faith? The work of Christ itself certainly does not by its nature determine it. The Scriptures everywhere proclaim its unlimited scope, and the possibility of its application to all. It is a personal merit of the Son who obeyed the Father's loving command even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. It has given him mediatorial power. That power is needed in all its fulness by every sinner. It is, therefore, capable of laying the foundation of just such gracious probation as our Arminian theology requires, and as we believe the Scripture teaches.

Again, this work of Christ in its nature exerts the moral power by which we may be lifted into the new and holy life.

First. It asserts the guilt of sin. The law which condemns it to penalty cannot be broken. Christ himself died to obey that law. He suffered the penalty laid upon the race.

Second. It sets forth the unspeakable value of holiness and of obedience to God. The infinite saving efficacy of Christ's work lies in the value of obedience. The glory of His mediatorial kingdom is founded on the worth of His righteousness and obedience.

Third. It has in it all the drawing power of love. "He loved us and gave himself for us." "We love him because he first loved us."

Fourth. It is the example to man and to the universe of moral beings, of Divine righteousness in all its fundamental elements—

1. As right.
2. As law.
3. As obedience.
4. As self-sacrifice.
5. As love.

Lastly, by the power of its moral value as a work of right, of law, of obedience, of self-sacrifice, of love, it gives infinite strength to that moral power in which the government of God stands eternally secure. It is not an expedient, not a make-shift to terrify, or a public dramatic object lesson, but it is the highest perfection of moral good that the universe has seen or can see, wrought out to the honor and glory of the Father by His well-beloved Son—a work which angels desire to look into, and beholding enter more perfectly themselves into the moral mind of God.

The Atonement then originates with the love of the Father to a world of sinners sending His only begotten Son. It is wrought by the love of the Son who enters into the will of the Father with loving obedience. To render that obedience, He enters into that law of our moral constitution which renders salvation possible and becomes man. As man He bows to all the

penalty which Divine law had laid upon the race. He does this that He may win from among men some who will believe on His name, *i.e.*, find the lost sheep. In doing this He merits from the Father an infinite reward, the benefits of which accrue to the race with which He has made himself one—first to all the race in bringing all within reach of God's mercy and a new and gracious probation, and then to all who receive Him and become His own in "giving them power to become the sons of God."

Thus, that which atones for sin is the offering to God of an infinite righteousness, in which the bearing of penalty is indeed the culmination of self-sacrifice, but in which the efficacy lies in the merit of its love, and from which there springs an inexhaustible fountain of grace and salvation.



THE  
RELATION - OF CHILDREN  
TO  
THE FALL, THE ATONEMENT,  
AND  
THE CHURCH.

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## THE MORAL CONDITION OF CHILDHOOD.

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THE subject of the moral status, or rather relations of childhood, is one which has always had a deep interest for the Church. This interest is practical as well as speculative; for upon the foundation from which we start will depend the character of the superstructure which we will build, and if our foundation be in error our superstructure cannot stand. The eternal well-being of our children depends upon a proper apprehension of their present moral condition, and upon the means which we employ to meet the necessities of that condition. A mistake in either direction is dangerous. If with Augustine we apprehend fully the consequences of the fall, but do not equally apprehend the universal provisions of redemption, we are in danger of the indifference of despair. If with Pelagius we apprehend the great fact that every man has within reach the powers necessary for a genuine personal probation, but lose sight of the full extent and reality of the consequences of the fall, we are in equal danger from over-confidence, or of missing the only true way of salvation.

What saith the Scripture? is the first enquiry of the Protestant Christian; and, subordinate to this highest standard, he may further ask, What saith the Church? We shall in this essay endeavour to present the replies furnished by these two authorities.

We shall analyze the teaching of Scripture and of the Church creeds by means of four questions which will, we think, cover the entire ground.

I. What is the relation of childhood to the fall?

II. What is the relation of childhood to the Atonement?

III. How do these two relations mutually limit each other?

IV. How do they form the basis of the child's relation to the Christian Church?

These four questions will enable us to define clearly the moral status from which the child enters upon its probation.

I. What is the relation of childhood to the fall? The Church answers this question by three dogmatic statements which constitute the doctrine of original sin. 1. All men from their birth inherit a sinful nature. 2. They inherit death and various sufferings as the penalty of sin. 3. They inherit guilt or desert of God's displeasure as the result of their sinful nature. To the first proposition all assent except the Pelagians. So to the second though there are various interpretations of the term death. The third proposition is matter of wider difference of opinion.

This entire doctrine is very clearly summarized in the ninth article of the Church of England as follows :—  
“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil ; and, therefore, in every person born into this world it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.” You will, of course, observe that in our seventh article, the last clause containing the third proposition as above is omitted, leaving this element of the doctrine open for further definition.

The scriptural foundation of this doctrine we shall find in two classic passages which, with their contexts and parallel passages, will require very careful examination.

The first of these is John iii. 3, 5, 6. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again (anew), he cannot see the kingdom of God.” . . . .  
“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” There are three terms here which require definition : the Kingdom of God, the New Birth, and the Flesh. The definition of the first is plainly indicated by Christ when he says, “The kingdom of God is within you ;” and by St.

Paul when he says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The kingdom of God is not an external organization, either in time or in eternity. It is not either the Church, or the heavenly state; but it is an internal moral condition, the condition into which the grace of the Gospel introduces every believer. The precise nature of this state is defined in Gal. v. 22, 23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

We are now able at once to define our second term the New Birth. It is that great change symbolized by the outward washing of water, and wrought by the inward work of the Spirit, whereby man enters into this moral state called the kingdom of God.

This change is wrought by the instrumentality of God's word. 1 Peter i. 23. "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." It is conditioned on faith. John i. 12, 13. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." And it is a self-evidencing change, v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

We have quoted these passages and have mentioned these characteristics of the New Birth to show that that view thereof which *Methodism introduced into modern theology* is the true and Scriptural one. The New Birth never in Scripture signifies a mere introduction into the outward and visible church ; nor does it signify an unconscious germ of grace, such as is supposed to be implanted by baptism in the heart of the infant. Nor does it signify a secret efficient influence of the Spirit working by the unknown predestinated counsel of God ; but everywhere a conscious work of the Spirit, applying the Word to renew the heart, and conditioned upon a personal faith in Christ.

But further our Lord in the passage before us asserts that we can enter into that moral state called the kingdom of God, only by this moral change called "being born again," not because we have *lost the gracious moral condition of our infancy* or natural birth, but because we *were born in an opposite moral condition*, which he calls the "*flesh* ;" "that which is born of the flesh is flesh."

The word flesh (*σὰρξ*) is used by Christ and by all the apostolic writers, apart from its original meaning of muscular tissue, first, to designate human nature. "The word was made flesh." "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," &c. Secondly, to designate human nature as weak. "The flesh is weak ;" "all flesh is grass." Thirdly, to designate human nature



as sinful and corrupt ; see especially the seventh and eighth of Romans ; the fifth and sixth of Galatians, the second of Ephesians, and the second of first John. In these various passages, which we need not quote at large, we have the fullest statements not only of the nature but also of the extent of this depravity, and all agree in presenting it as a state out of which no good thing can be brought by the power of our own will. And this is the moral state in which we are born, and from which we can be delivered only by the great change of the New Birth. This passage and its collateral texts certainly justify the first and most important element of the Church doctrine of original sin.

The second and third elements have been evolved entirely from the second great classic text referred to above taken in connection with one or two collaterals. This passage is Rom. v. 12-19, which we must next examine. This text is a summary and expansion of the whole doctrine of sin and salvation contained in the preceding epistle, chap. 1. 17—v. 11. The “wherefore” grows out of the entire argument which proved man’s universal sin, and the sole possibility of his salvation in Christ. But it goes beyond the line of the preceding argument, and shows the correspondence of the *origin of sin* with the *origin of salvation*.

Let us bear in mind that especially in chapter iii. the Apostle had emphatically asserted, and in chapters i. and ii. proved indirectly, the universality of sin. In verse 12, he goes to the root of this universal fact,



and assigns its cause. "By one man sin entered into the world;" literally "*the sin*," sin as a generic principle, as an active moral force in humanity, for "the world" is doubtless the world of human kind. "And by *the sin*, *the death*, generic death, the principle and power of death;" "and so the death passed through unto all men." (The second *ὁ θάνατος* is doubtful, it may read, "and so it passed through unto all men," i.e. "the sin" and "the death." Even if the *textus receptus* is correct, the passage of "the death" implies the passage of its vehicle "the sin.") "Whence all have sinned." It is well known that the particle which we have here translated "whence," *ἐφ' ᾧ*, has been the source of difficulty to translators from the fourth century downward. Jerome and Augustine translate "in whom" whence their doctrine of the sin of the race in Adam. Most moderns take it as a causal particle or conjunction equal to *ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὅτι* "on account of this that" all have sinned." It would thus assign a reason for the passage of death. So Meyer, Philippi, Hodge, Stuart, Alford, Lange, Winer, Watson, Whedon, and Beet. This reason is supplementary to that given in the adverb *ὥστε* "so" or "in this way." This translation of *ἐφ' ᾧ* certainly may be justified by usage both classical (*ἐφ' οὐς*) and New Testament. But it is not the only meaning of the term; and it here involves great difficulty. First, it makes the apostle assign two independent and almost conflicting reasons for the universality of death; secondly, it makes the

second reason defensible only by strange contortions of the plain meaning of the words, "all sinned;" a simple historical actual fact must be read, "all sinned in Adam" an unjustifiable addition, Bengel, Olshausen, and Philippi and Meyer; or "all have been treated as sinners," Hodge, and most Arminians; or "all are sinful," Calvin, Watson, etc.; or "all have personally sinned," Tholuck, Stuart, Whedon, Lange. But while this last is the only interpretation grammatically defensible, it is difficult to prove it true in fact when more than half the race die without personal commission of sin, as Paul goes on immediately to state. We are therefore driven back to look at the conjunctive particle  $\epsilon\phi\ \omega$ . It occurs in the New Testament three times, all in the writings of St. Paul, viz., here, and 2 Cor. v. 4, and Philippians iii. 12. In Corinthians we have in the received text,  $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$ , and the translation is evidently "because," or "for that." But in the second passage where the reading is uniform, it evidently means "on account of which." This sense it also has in several classical passages referred to by Schleusner. Now we have only to use this simple meaning of the particle here, as Thomasius has already done, though somewhat awkwardly, and the meaning is clear. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death (or it) passed through unto all men; on account of which all (as before stated) have sinned." The relative  $\omega$  is taken as neuter and refers not to death but to the *entire fact*

stated in the two preceding clauses. This result is stated because *it connects the summary with the previous argument and is not an irrelevant addition.* It also makes the protasis exactly correspond with verses 18 and 19 when added together. By one offence it came unto all to condemnation, and by one disobedience many were made sinners; so here "all have sinned." But before introducing his apodosis the apostle stops to explain, as is his wont, with *γὰρ* "For there was sin in the world up to (the time of) law;" a confirmation of the doctrine of the universality of sin which could have taken place only by the transmission of "the sin" from Adam, inasmuch as "sin is not imputed in the absence of law;" hence sin could not have *originated during this period by individual transgression.* Hence the conclusion that sin entered into the world and was transmitted through those pre-Mosaic ages by inheritance from Adam, a conclusion strengthened by a further fact introduced by *αλλά*; "yet, still death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," *i.e.*, against a positive law with definite penalty of death, under which the sin could be charged and the penalty exacted. The axiomatic principle, "sin is not charged in the absence of law," stands thus between two well-known facts, to each of which it is adversatively opposed, and with which it can be reconciled only by conceding the three great principles announced in verse 12.

In further illustration of those principles, we are told in verse 15, that "through the offence of one, many died;" that "judgment from one, issued unto condemnation;" that "by the transgression of one, death reigned through one." Finally, in verse 18, the apodosis is repeated. "Therefore, as by the offence of one, it passed through unto all men unto condemnation; \* \* \* for as by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners," etc. The teaching of Paul in this passage may thus be summarized as follows: By the positive transgression or disobedience of one man (Adam) the principle or power of sin entered into the world bringing with it death as the sentence against sin, and this principle of sin and death passed through unto all men, resulting in universal sin (actual) and universal condemnation. Parallel with this passage is the declaration of 1 Cor. xv. 22. "In Adam all die," not "did die" when he sinned and died, but "do (individually) die" in the present. So, also, that of Eph. ii. 2, "And were by nature children of wrath." The expression "children of wrath," like "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction," signifies *fitness* or *justice arising from character*. And this character we have *φύσει* not by habit or act, but naturally; by birth *our moral character* is such as *fits us for wrath*, makes us just objects of Divine wrath.

But it is important to note what is not asserted in these passages as well as what is. It is not asserted that we are objects of Divine wrath apart from our

depraved character; nor is it asserted that we are objects of Divine wrath apart from the manifestation of our sinful nature in actual transgression; nor is it asserted that the sentence of death passes upon us apart from the transmission to us of a sinful nature, ("the sin,") but rather as the result of such transmission. But it does appear that the transmission of the sentence of death is independent of the imputation of personal transgression. If we read aright, Paul asserts that universal personal transgression (he is speaking of adults) and universal death, both proceed from the principle of sin (*η αμαρτια*) introduced by Adam. And it certainly can proceed from Adam only through infancy. What is this principle of sin (*η αμαρτια*)?

This question, Paul has very fully answered in the seventh and eighth of Romans, where he uses the term eleven times, and clearly identifies it with "*lust*" and with "*the flesh*," and speaks of it as "*dwelling in me*," "*in my members*" and "*in my flesh*," and as being a "*law of sin and death*." This is "*the sin*" which, according to St. Paul, every man, and hence every child, receives as an inheritance from Adam; and this is the moral state in which, according to the teaching of Christ, each one of us is born into the world. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*"

But, besides this identification of the principle of evil, and this clear statement of the extent of its powers which we have in the seventh and eighth of Romans, we have also some very important teachings



regarding the development of this principle in the human conscience, and its process of cure. Sin and death are not unfolded in their powers and relations, either to the physical or the moral nature, all at once. There is a stage in the life of man where he does not yet recognize "the sin that dwelleth in" him, and when he has not yet passed into conscious spiritual death. "I did not know the sin, except through the law." "Apart from the law sin is dead." "I was, at one time, alive without or apart from law." "But when the commandment came, sin *rose up into life*, and I died." The doctrine of these words seems to be that the existence of this principle of sin within is not manifest, and that its conscious result, death (spiritual) or the separation of the soul from God is not experienced until we arrive at that stage of moral development, which brings us into conscious contact with the law of God. The child knows not, as yet, either sin or death. Sin is latent or "dead" in the sense of being inactive. And its fruit, death, is only experienced when sin awakes up into life, *i.e.*, breaks forth into *actual transgression* in antagonism to revealed law. This is St. Paul's presentation of what we *call the innocency of childhood*. Thus the whole practical question involved in our subject is reduced by Paul's statements to this: Are there any provisions of the Gospel by which this *waking up* of "the sin" into life may be entirely *prevented*? by which the root of evil may be destroyed before it has ever put forth



buds or blossoms, or borne its deadly fruit of conscious separation from God? Certainly, according to this teaching, "the sin" is not, even in the child, a *mere nominal or theoretical matter*, but a terrible power ready to wake up into life. Before we can answer this question, we must consider the second grand enquiry of our subject.

II. What is the relation of Childhood to the Atonement? It might be supposed that this question could be answered apart from all theories or views of the atonement. This is, however, not the case. It is only an Arminian view of the atonement, (which regards the work of Christ as securing certain substantial benefits impartially for all the race alike,) which admits of the discussion of this question. Under any Calvinistic view of the atonement, there is absolutely no difference between the relation of childhood to the atonement and the relation of manhood to the atonement. If the child is elect, or the man is elect, the atonement absolutely secures his final salvation; if not—nothing. On the other hand, Arminianism teaches that Christ died for all men, and that in virtue of that death, certain provisions of salvation are secured for all men, infants included, and are extended to them *as their moral development admits*. Let us carefully examine what these provisions are, and then we shall see clearly how far they apply to infancy.

I do not know that in the entire round of dogmatic theology, you can find a more accurate setting-forth of

what Christ has effected for the whole race than is given by Mr. Wesley in the Standard of our own Church. Sermon V. (i. 9.) "By the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, there is no more condemnation for us, but we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This statement is evidently founded upon two passages of Scripture, Rom. v. 12-19, and 2 Cor. v. 18-21. These we must now consider in their bearing on the general work of Christ.

We have already examined Rom. v. 12, &c., in its exposition of the results of Adam's sin. It, on the other hand, presents that which comes to all the world through the righteousness or obedience of Christ as, first of all, "grace" *χαρις*; secondly, as "a gift or giving (*δωρεα εν χαριτι*) through grace." *χαρισμα* and *δωρημα* are the more manward or passive aspects of the same. But these are expanded in v. 17 by the addition of *εις δικαιοωμα* and *της δικαιοσυνης* "grace unto justification and a gift of righteousness." And this is said to come "unto all men unto justification of life," and by it many are "constituted righteous." But between these terms and the corresponding terms of the fall into sin, there is a perfect parallel. By one man's disobedience the sin absolutely entered into the world. So, by the one man's obedience, grace is

revealed and comes to all. But that sin works out its results of death, and actual transgression, and personal separation of individual men from God only by a process of development described in Rom. vii. So grace works out its results of justification and life only by an operative development. But the grace comes absolutely to all men. So in Titus ii. 11, "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men." What is implied in this grace? This question we will answer after we have examined our second passage.

2 Cor. v. 18, &c. The passage may be literally rendered as follows: "All things are of God who *hath reconciled* (past tense) to himself by Christ, and *gives* (present) us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit that God *was* in or by Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them and committing to us the word of reconciliation." Mr. Wesley has evidently taken the aorist participle and the imperfect tense as referring to a definite past historical fact, and that as *accomplished* by the atoning work of Christ. So, in later times, Alford, Meyer, Kling, &c. All these authorities agree in recognizing here a reconciliation of the world of *mankind at large*, as a body, or a race, a placing of *the entire world* in a new and *merciful relation to God*, a relation directly opposed to the relation in which they were placed by the sin of Adam; but a relation which *does not do away with the necessity for individual reconciliation*,

but *opens or prepares the way for it, and leads to it.* "The saving grace revealed for all men," and "the reconciliation of the world," and "the gift and grace unto all men unto justification of life," are all *one and the same thing*,—a relation of God in mercy to the world opened up by Christ.

This gracious relation of the world to God in Christ Mr. Wesley designates as "a new covenant" of probation, given to the whole world, and to every individual of the world, but still demanding that the probational conditions of that covenant be fulfilled. Upon the fulfilment of these conditions all the blessings of the covenant are bestowed; but the entire race are embraced in the covenant, and can be excluded from it only by their individual act of transgressing the covenant. "He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is already condemned, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God." "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." \* \* "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God *remaineth* on him." These last expressions are very significant, as showing clearly that each individual, while embraced in God's covenant of mercy toward the race, sees life and escapes from God's condemning wrath, personally, only by the exercise of faith in Christ. The same truth is taught

in 2 Cor. v., where the reconciliation of the world in Christ still leaves it necessary that each individual should for himself "*be reconciled to God.*" Hence, neither in the infant nor in the penitent adult are we to confound the mercy of God's covenant of grace with the whole world in Christ, with individual justifying grace. It is something that looks toward, and, when not frustrated by actual transgressions, issues in justification of life, but it is *not yet such justification, nor does it supersede its necessity.*

But Divine grace is not merely a relation of favour or mercy in which God stands toward the race, it is an inward operative power for man's salvation; just as the sin which entered into the world by the first man was a relation of opposition to or estrangement from God, but also an inward corrupting power of evil. Mercy as a relation would be in vain without mercy as a helping-power. What is the saving moral power which the atonement brings to men? When, and where, and in whom does it begin to work? This leads us into the very heart of our subject.

Various answers have been given to this question. The predestinarian looks upon this grace as of 'the nature of regeneration. It operates only in the elect, by the secret effectual operation of the Spirit, and in God's own good time. The Arminian looks upon this grace as essentially distinct from regeneration, and as operating in the hearts of all men, but when and how it begins to work has been a question undecided. The



Sacramentarian looks upon this grace as provided for all, but as conditioned by the sacraments, and operating only when and where the sacraments have been properly administered. They, too, regard the grace as being of the nature of regeneration. Some have held that this grace caught, as it were, man in his fall, and prevented his lapsing into a condition from which salvation would have been impossible, thus very closely approximating to semi-Pelagianism. Some have found the answer to this question in the fifth of Romans, in the words, "unto all men, unto justification of life," and have held that this grace is of the nature of regeneration—a new life, and that it is universally and unconditionally given through the atonement, but may be lost, in the subsequent probation. Such hold that this grace fits all dying in infancy for heaven, or, rather, that in virtue of it they are already in that state, and that this is the meaning of the expression, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is to be noted that this view makes operative saving grace begin at the moment of initiation of physical life; that it makes it of the nature of regeneration, the communication of a new inner life, and that to give any reality to the strong language of Scripture touching man's natural state, it is obliged to interpret it of a *second lapse* into an estate of spiritual death. Let us examine, first of all; the Scriptures adduced to support this view, and then some further Scriptures which seem to us to preclude it. The first



and most important of these is Romans v. 12-21. Of course we have here a parallel between Adam and Christ, as "both representatives of the entire race, so that their acts, of transgression on the one hand, and righteousness on the other, extended in their effects to all the individuals of the race." The only question is, do these effects pass irresistibly and of necessity to all the race, and *by the same law or process of moral connection*. "The Apostle employs the terms life and death to set forth the effects of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness upon the human race." True, but let us see what these terms mean. Life is union of soul and body, and conscious union of the whole man with God. Death is separation of soul and body, and conscious separation of the soul from God. *Death spiritual is not to be identified with depravity*. Depravity, "*the sin*," is transmitted directly from Adam, by virtue of our natural connection with him, but death comes to soul or body only as that depravity has finished its course. "Sin [the sin], when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 15. Now, to *sin*, which passes upon all men by necessary entail, is opposed *grace*, equally universal and unconditional in its outgoing. But as death comes only by a *process of sin*, so life may come only by a *process of grace*. What is this process? That there is such a process is implied in the passage before us. Let us look at it verse by verse.

“But not as the offence, so is the gracious gift; for if through the offence of one the many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift in the grace of the one man, Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto the many.” And not as by one who sinned is the gift, for the judgment of one is unto condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto righteousness. For if by the offence of one, death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of the grace and the gift of righteousness in life, shall reign through one, Jesus Christ. “Therefore, as by one offence it comes unto all men unto condemnation, so also, through one righteousness it comes unto all men unto justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Now, we are quite willing to admit, with Dr. Hibbard, in all this the perfect parallel between Adam and Christ, and that as far as the results of Adam’s sin are unconditional, so far are the results of Christ’s atoning work unconditional. That as the results of Adam’s sin are universal, so are the results of Christ’s work universal; but beyond this we are not warranted in going. The expressions “unto all men, unto condemnation,” “unto righteousness,” “unto justification of life,” by no means exclude *processes and conditions*, both on the one side and on the other. The preposition *eis*, simply denotes *direction*, the end to which a force is working, not at which it has already arrived. *To interpret it*

*otherwise would be to make this passage teach absolute universalism.* What is asserted in this passage is, that God's grace in Christ looks to, provides for, and works to the final justification and life of all men, just as the sin of Adam tends to the final sin and condemnation of all men. But the process by which Adam's sin results in the final condemnation of any man is not *an unconditional process*. It is only through his own wilful transgression of law or of condition of probation. So the process by which Christ's grace results in justification and life is not asserted to be unconditional. There is no universal justification, or universal regeneration of life taught here as flowing from Christ unconditionally, but only *a universal grace* leading to individual justification and life, the conditions and process of which are elsewhere explained.

Especially must we insist on this in opposition to Dr. Hibbard, in v. 17, "They who receive," etc., in this case are not all mankind unconditionally, but those *who have fulfilled the conditions*, and thus have received. Any other interpretation of this verse makes it teach absolute universalism, or unconditional election. All through his argument Dr. Hibbard makes this mistake, of taking final effects for immediate ones, reading into condemnation and death a special fictitious or imputation meaning, and leaving out of sight entirely the intervening conditions, so fully implied in every case in St. Paul's *chosen preposition*, εἰς.

The next passage, or rather series of passages, which demands our attention, will be found in St. Matthew's Gospel, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, (or rather turn back), and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, then, shall humble himself as this little child, that one is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and whosoever shall receive one such little one in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him," etc. "Take heed that ye offend not (or despise not) one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father in Heaven." "What think ye," etc. "Even so it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish." There are two interpretations of this passage. In the one the children are presented by Christ as candidates for the kingdom, with young hearts open to receive the truth, in that believing receptive state into which the seed of the kingdom may most easily enter, and bring forth its fruits of eternal life. They are ready to enter into the kingdom as soon as its Divine Word becomes intelligible to their understanding; they are in a believing, trustful, receptive state of mind; they are candidates for the kingdom most precious in the sight of the great heavenly Father, but still "*lost sheep*" whom the Gospel must "seek and find." Like all

others who shall be heirs of salvation, they are the objects of angelic care, and therefore God is "*seeking them.*" The whole discourse thus sets forth, in most beautiful terms, the fact that religion may begin with the earliest *conscious responsibility*, and that the hardened sinner must "*turn back,*" not, "be converted" in the modern sense, but turn back to the estate of childlikeness before he can "enter the kingdom." This we believe to be the true interpretation of the passage. The other interpretation places the child already in the kingdom, in which case *it would not need to be sought, but only to be kept from wandering.* The nineteenth chapter, verse 14, is precisely similar. "But Jesus said, Suffer the little children and forbid them not (or, hinder them not), to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The genitive, "of such," here may mean belonging to such *as a possession*, or belonging to such *as something promised and provided for them.* We have a precisely similar form of speech in Matt. v., "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs" (literally, of them) "is the kingdom of heaven." This does not necessarily mean that they have already entered the kingdom, but that they are ready to enter. The poor in spirit, the humble-minded, and the receptive spirit of the child, are all alike put *in promise* of the kingdom.

But, on the other hand, we have only to refer back to the passages already adduced as proving the fallen estate in which man is born, to show that Christ can-



not be understood as asserting, in either of these passages, that our children are born already in the kingdom. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "In sin did my mother conceive me." "By nature the children of wrath." "Sin passed through unto all men, and death by sin, whence all have sinned." Now, if already, by the unconditional provisions of the atonement, the new life had been planted in all men from their very birth, surely all would not have come under the dominion of sin; the new life, in some at least, would have been strong enough to overpower the sin; and the position of Pelagius would have been *actually* true, that "some men might have been sinless."

Again, opposed to this idea of universal regeneration, are all the passages which describe the way to the kingdom. This is universally, "Repent, and believe the Gospel." There is no other way revealed. Repentance is universally necessary. If so, then men are not already in the kingdom by birth, or by baptism; in fact, this whole notion of unconscious, germinal grace or regeneration, has no foundation in the Word of God. The Scriptures make mention of no work of grace except that which is matter of conscious experience, beginning in repentance and faith, and perfected in joy, peace, and love; and this is the kingdom of God, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Methodism first brought the modern church back to this Scriptural definition of regenera-



tion as *the conscious crisis of religious life*, conditioned on faith, preceded by repentance, and crowned by the witness of the Spirit; and a sad day will it be for Methodism when she forsakes this clear foundation of conscious experience, and begins to trust in any occult work, supposed to be wrought secretly, by unconditional grace, and in unconscious states of existence. It is fraught with all the dangers of baptismal regeneration, or of unconditional election. It was difficult even for John Wesley himself to break away from the old notion of regeneration as a mysterious work wrought in baptism. Rather than deny the old church doctrine he was inclined to look upon men generally as backsliders, and speaks of the time when he himself sinned away the grace of his baptism. But all this belonged not to the Methodist Arminian theology which he was founding, but to the churchism which he was leaving behind. And the whole evangelical Christianity of our day has taken up the central idea of his theology, that the new birth is the conscious crisis of religious experience preceded by repentance, conditioned upon faith, wrought by the Word and Spirit of God, and completed in the full assurance of Sonship. To depart from this view is to reduce the work of the church to a process of *education*, as distinguished from the work of *evangelization*.

III. We are now prepared to see how these two relations limit each other, and in fact we see that they do not limit each other, until *they both begin to work*

in the conscious experience of the moral life. It is very true that there is a physical propagation of sin, because our relation to Adam is physical. But that physical propagation of sin becomes a moral and spiritual state, only when we become capable of moral conscious life. On the other hand our relation to Christ is purely moral, and spiritual; and it, too, begins to take effect just as soon as we become capable of conscious moral life. The very moment we are capable of manifesting the disease, we are capable of using the remedy, and that is repentance toward God and faith on our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus all that the Scriptures declare concerning our relation to Adam is actually, practically true; not hypothetically, putatively, or ideally true. It is to be taken just as it reads without limitation. And so the provisions of the Gospel are to be taken as *to be applied to the disease in God's order*, and on His conditions.

But it is asked what then becomes of those who die before conscious moral life is fully and fairly developed? We can only reply God cares for them and provides for their case. But to them *we have no duty*. For them we can do nothing. How God applies to them the provisions of the Gospel, or on what conditions, we know not. All that we can say is that in those provisions *they have a share*, and God will not deprive them of it. If there had been anything which we could have contributed to their salvation, God would have

revealed it. But as there was nothing for us to do, God hath given no revelation. Revelation never steps beyond that which is needful for us to know. It gratifies no curiosity. It spins no theories. It states only positive facts in which we are directly concerned. The result of the whole teaching of Scripture is this: That all men are born with a physical taint of sin, (the word physical here includes the twofold nature of man,) which immediately that we become capable of conscious moral life, breaks forth in actual transgression, and brings us into a state of conscious spiritual death, out of which we can be delivered only as, with penitent confession of our sin, we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; when the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death."

But we are also born under a dispensation of mercy, in which the Gospel promise meets *the first pang of conscience* arising from the first awakening of inborn sin, and brings with it a word and spirit of grace, the power of a new and eternal life. And when the Gospel thus finds us in the days of our childhood, it finds us in a state of *preparedness* to feel its power, and receive its grace; a state to which we can *return* in after days, only by the mighty power of the Divine Spirit.

And the Gospel thus finds us in the days of our childhood, because we are all born under a covenant of grace and mercy, and are the objects of the Father's intense saving love and compassion, and of solicitude

and joy among his angels. I do not say that God could not save us before we were conscious of it. All I say is that he has not revealed any such way of salvation, but that he has clearly revealed the way of conscious repentance, faith, and new birth of the Spirit; and that he has declared this to be the way for *all men*; and I dare not risk the salvation of my children on any other way, and I dare not attempt to build the church of the future upon any other way. But if these things be so:

IV. What has the Church to do with the children? Much every way, because the Father loves them, Christ died for them, angels watch over them. They are born under a covenant of grace, and are heirs of all its provisions, although they have not yet commenced to enjoy them. They are all ready with the first dawn of moral life, *more ready* than they can be at any later period, to receive the provisions of the Gospel, and to feel its saving power. "Of such" is the kingdom. Now the Church is not composed only of those who have already entered into the kingdom, but of all who are *seeking it*. She baptises all who are *looking for* "*remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" She baptises them in token of Christ's covenant of mercy. And as children are only waiting for the opening of moral life, that they too may receive remission and new life, she gives them the sign of the covenant, and takes them into the fold, that just as their moral natures unfold *she may apply*

*to them the saving truths of the Gospel of which she is the minister ; not another Gospel of Christian culture, but the old, universal Gospel of pardon through Christ.*

The Church takes the children in, not because they have salvation already, but because *they need it ;* and have *a right to it* by God's covenant of mercy under which they have been born ; and the Church has the word of that salvation, and is *in duty bound to give it to them*, as soon as they are able to receive it. And in so doing she is truly fulfilling the command of the Lord, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of God."



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